

King receives message from Prince Hassan

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Tuesday received a message from HRH Prince Hassan, who congratulated the King upon his assumption of his constitutional duties. "I send you sincere congratulations from a compassionate uncle and father," Prince Hassan said in his message to the Hashemite Monarch. "You are the son of Al Hussein Ben Talal, whose name remains high for his achievements as one of the nation's knights in this century." The Prince prayed to God for the success and prosperity of King Abdullah in serving Jordan and its people. Prince Hassan also congratulated HRH Crown Prince Hamzah for his designation as heir to the Throne. "Through Your Majesty, I send sincere congratulations to Prince Hamzah," he said.

Volume 24 Number 7067

AMMAN WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1999, SHAWWAL 24, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 Fils

King Abdullah, Queen Noor receive mourners

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — His Majesty King Abdullah yesterday received the condolences of thousands of Jordanian men, who came from across the country to express their sympathy over the passing of King Hussein.

Muslim and Christian clerics, tribal sheikhs, Circassian notables, elders from Palestinian refugee camps, businessmen, and teenagers

shook hands and kissed King Abdullah, many pausing for a moment to pledge their allegiance to the Monarch. A physically disabled man in a wheelchair carried a portrait of King Hussein as he offered his sympathies to the King. He was one of many disabled men who arrived at Raghadan Palace, where the Royal Court is holding three days of condolences.

One of the people who called at the palace, business-

man Sharif Said, said: "I went there to pay my respects for the leader who built the Kingdom. I owe him what I have achieved in this country."

Dressed in traditional black robes and white mourning headscarves, crowds of female mourners went to Raghadan Palace, home of the late Queen Zein Al Sharaf, to offer sympathy to Her Majesty Queen Noor and the Princesses, including King's Abdullah's mother Princess Muna.

Verses from the Holy Koran filled the air.

The Queen, often comforting mourners herself, received women from the Jordan Armed Forces, bedouin women whose lives have been changed through her institutions, and hundreds of women there to offer her solace.

An endless line of women from every sector of Jordan's diverse society streamed through the Jabal Amman palace to pay tribute to their fallen King and embrace his widow Queen Noor.

On the streets of Amman, ordinary life has taken on a sombre face. Only a few food shops and pharmacies opened. Cars with small black flags hoisted on their windows passed residences and commercial buildings bearing the late King Hussein's photographs and black draped clothes.

The government announced a 40-day period of mourning and ordered its offices closed until Saturday. The Royal Court will observe a three-month mourning period for King Hussein, who died Sunday at the age of 63.

Although schools were closed, it was difficult to spot any children playing in squares or on the streets.

Embassies, hotels, banks, and other organisations across the capital flew their flags at half mast and hung black flags and banners from their buildings.

King Hussein was laid to rest Monday following a splendid funeral cortege through the streets of Amman



His Majesty King Abdullah greets a man Tuesday during a general audience at the Raghadan Palace in Amman (AP photo)

to the Royal Palaces complex. Kings, presidents and dignitaries from more than 50

countries joined Jordanians in mourning King Hussein, who reigned for nearly half a century.

Announcement on condolences

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Protocol announcement Tuesday said condolences by women mourners, to be presented at Zahran Palace on Thursday, Feb. 11, 1999 between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., will be restricted to the following: the wives of the prime minister, the Senate president, the Lower House speaker, the chief of the Royal Court, the King's advisors, former prime ministers, senators, deputies, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, senior officers of the Armed Forces and the Public Security, General Intelligence and Civil Defence departments, ambassadors to Jordan, heads of regional and international organisations, the mayor and the governor of Amman, and the heads of non-governmental and charitable organisations.

Cuba in mourning for King Hussein

HAVANA (AFP) — Cuba declared a day of mourning for Jordan's King Hussein, according to national television Monday. Flags were to be lowered to half-staff for 24 hours from 1700 GMT Monday, the broadcast said. The station also aired images of the Hashemite King's funeral in Amman. Cuba and Jordan maintain normal diplomatic relations.

Syrian presence at funeral welcomed

DUBAI (AFP) — The Gulf press on Tuesday said the funeral of King Hussein united Arab states despite their conflicts, welcoming in particular the presence of Syrian President Hafez Assad. "Israel is doing its best to create a gulf between" Jordan and Syria, "but Assad's visit aborted the plot hatched by Tel Aviv," Qatar's Al Watan newspaper said. "Jordan united Arab leaders, who in the face of the Jordanian people's grief, testified to the nobility of the Arab character and put their conflicts behind them," the United Arab Emirates' Al Wahda daily said. The newspaper in particular welcomed the presence of Assad and Kuwait's Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah. "The widespread participation of world leaders at King Hussein's funeral reflects his stature, which reflected in Jordan's role in international and regional affairs," Saudi daily Al Madina said.

Aid to PNA dedicated to King Hussein

RAFAH (R) — The private international relief group AmeriCares delivered \$3.3 million in medical supplies to the Palestinian National Authority on Tuesday, dedicating the shipment to the memory of King Hussein. A cargo plane carrying the aid landed at Gaza International Airport, which opened last November. "It is in [the King's] honour," said Debra Zarkowsky, executive director of the Texas Hadassah Medical Research Foundation which coordinated the 50-tonne shipment, part of which will be used by Hadassah facilities in Israel that also treat Palestinians. "It is something we know he would have supported because of his interests in furthering the peace process," she said. Palestinian Health Minister Riad Al Zanoun said the medical supplies would be transferred to hospitals and clinics in Gaza and the West Bank.

U.N. calls King Hussein 'peace warrior'

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. Security Council on Tuesday called King Hussein "a steadfast warrior for peace" and one of the greatest leaders in the Middle East. Paying tribute to the King at its first meeting since his death on Sunday, the council offered its condolences and sympathy to His Majesty King Abdullah, Her Majesty Queen Noor, and the people of Jordan. "We have all lost a steadfast warrior for peace," the council said in a statement read by its current president, Canada's U.N. Ambassador Robert Fowler. "His prodigious and comprehensive understanding of his region and his willingness to take risks for peace helped to secure a brighter future for his people and hope for his entire region," the council said. "His presence both in words and deeds will be missed but not forgotten by the Security Council as it continues to work for peace and security in the Middle East," it said.

U.N. postpones session to pay tribute

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. General Assembly postponed an emergency session on Israel's settlement policies to pay tribute to King Hussein, whose country had pressed for the debate. On Monday the Jordanians, Palestinians and Israelis were united in mourning the King. Calling the King's death a profound loss, Jordan's U.N. Ambassador Hassan Abu Nimah said he would leave a great void in the Middle East, especially in the area of peace-building. But he said His Majesty King Abdullah would continue Jordan's role in the region. Palestinian delegate Nasser Al Kidwa called the King "a visionary, and a noble and courageous servant of the Arab people" who had been a fervent architect of peace. Echoing this view, Israel's U.N. Ambassador Dore Gold said the King had demonstrated how trust for leaders could be transferred to trust between peoples — and he said the trust between Israel and Jordan held lessons for Arab-Israeli relations.

U.S. Senate honours King Hussein

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. Senate, briefly breaking away from impeachment, Monday unanimously passed a resolution honouring "the life and legacy" of King Hussein and extending a hand of friendship to his son and successor His Majesty King Abdullah. The resolution, approved Monday evening after the Senate wrapped up the day's impeachment proceedings, praised King Hussein for instituting democratic reforms in Jordan and for having "established a model for Arab-Israeli coexistence in Jordan's ties with the State of Israel."

Israel plans King Hussein memorials

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli authorities plan to mint a special medal and plant a forest in memory of King Hussein, officials said on Tuesday. The state coins and medals corporation said the State of Israel Memorial Medal paying tribute to King Hussein would bear a portrait of the Monarch on one side while the reverse would carry the flags of Israel and Jordan and the inscription "Peace for the Children of Abraham." The Jewish National Fund also announced that it was looking for a suitable spot to establish a forest in memory of King Hussein.

Paris mayor plans King Hussein street

PARIS (AP) — Paris Mayor Jean Tiberi says he would like to see a city street named for the late King Hussein. A spokeswoman for the Paris city hall said Tuesday the mayor plans to submit the idea before the city council, which must give its approval. The family of the Jordanian leader, who was buried on Monday, also must grant permission. The spokeswoman said renaming Paris streets is a lengthy, complex procedure that can take up to 10 years, but that special consideration is given to important world leaders.



A woman embraces Her Majesty Queen Noor during a general audience Tuesday at Zahran Palace in Amman (AP photo)

Israeli settlers move into former army post in Golan Heights

TEL AVIV (AP) — Settlers have moved into an abandoned Israeli army post on the Golan Heights and plan to establish a new settlement there, a settler leader said Tuesday.

A former Defence Ministry official confirmed that the military site was turned over to civilian use, but said no approval had yet been given for the creation of a new settlement.

The World Zionist Organisation, a quasi-governmental organisation that controls the site, said it had no plans to establish a settlement there.

A new Golan settlement would likely provoke Syria and make it more difficult to restart Israeli-Syrian peace talks that have been suspended for the past three years.

As a condition for a peace treaty, Syria wants Israel to return the strategic plateau it occupied in the 1967 Mideast war.

The report of new settlement activity came only a day after U.S. President Bill Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Assad met in Amman after the funeral of King Hussein.

Syria says it wants talks to pick up where they left off in February 1996 — report-

edly with an understanding with Netanyahu's dovish predecessors that Israel would return all of the Golan in exchange for suitable security arrangements.

Netanyahu, who opposes territorial compromise on the Golan, has rejected Syria's demands.

A new Golan community, called Nimrod, is being established near the Druze Arab town of Majdal Shams, close to the border with Syria, said Avi Zeira, chairman of the Golan Heights Residents Committee.

About 17,000 Israeli settlers live on the Golan, along with about 14,000 Druze, followers of an offshoot of Islam.

"We want to send a message to the Druze population that we plan to stay in the area," Zeira said.

"There are people who think you can reach a partial agreement with the Syrians and give them the northern Golan, specifically the Druze areas," Zeira said. "It's a signal that we're strengthening settlements in that area as well."

The Haaretz daily said Nimrod was an Israeli army outpost for 19 years.

Eli Cohen, a former Defence Ministry official, said the land was transferred

Netanyahu promises 'new peace accord' this year

RAMAT GAN (AFP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hinted Tuesday that Israel could reach a peace agreement with Lebanon and Syria by the end of the year.

"I promise a new peace agreement before the year 2000," Netanyahu told reporters during a visit to the Diamond Exchange in Ramat Gan which came as he was in a tough campaign for reelection in May.

Netanyahu did not specify with whom Israel would sign the peace accord, but a close aide said he was referring to Syria and Lebanon.

In the same remarks, Netanyahu said "I would be pleased to renew negotiations with Syria and Lebanon at any time," but he did not repeat his reference to a timetable.

In an interview with a U.S. television network broadcast earlier Tuesday Netanyahu told of how during the funeral Monday for King Hussein he had been just "a few meters away" from Syrian President Hafez Assad, although the two did not speak.

"I think that after the elections, we'll sit together, one way or another, in the same tent," he said. "It doesn't depend only on me, but since I heard that same expression of hope coming from Syria, I'm eager to reciprocate it," he added.

to the settlement division of the World Zionist Organisation a few months ago for civilian use. The WZO is a subsidiary of the Jewish Agency, a quasi-governmental body that owns large tracts of land. Cohen said settlers would require government approval to turn Nimrod into a full-fledged settlement.

Zeira said one family has already moved into the former army buildings at Nimrod, and a dozen more are to settle there in the future, five within the next few weeks.

The WZO said in a statement that a family looking for a remote place to live has moved into the army post, but that "there is no intention to... turn it into a settlement because of its remote location and because of geographical problems."

King receives condolences from Iranian president

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah Tuesday received a cable of condolence from Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, who expressed heartfelt sympathies in his name and on behalf of the government and people of Iran to the King, the Hashemite family and the people of Jordan.

President Khatami wished King Abdullah every happiness and success and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity.

Also Tuesday, King Abdullah received at Raghadan Palace Al Saidi Al Qadhafi, son of Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi, who conveyed the heartfelt condolences of the Libyan leader, government and people. King Abdullah expressed appreciation to President Qadhafi and wished him continued good health and happiness.

King Abdullah received a telephone call from Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, who expressed his heartfelt condolences to King Abdullah over the passing of King Hussein. President Lahoud wished King Abdullah continued good health and happiness and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity under King Abdullah's leadership.

The following countries, organisations and dignitaries also sent cables to the King: the heads of state of Iran, Morocco, Yemen, Kuwait, the Palestinian National Authority, Sharjah, Mauritania, Malaysia, Pakistan, Gambia, Armenia, Guinea, Ghana, North Korea, Guyana, Togo, Brazil, Poland, Cuba, Chile, Lithuania, China, Australia, Azerbaijan, Eritrea, Slovenia, Yugoslavia, Nepal, the Philippines, India, Bosnia, South Africa, Lesotho, the Czech Republic, Pope John Paul II, the president of the Higher Peoples Council of North Korea, the prime ministers of Lebanon, Pakistan, former Bulgarian prime ministers, the speaker of the Palestine National Council, Prince Aki-chito, the second son of the emperor of Japan, Cardinal Nasrallah Sfeir of Antakya and the Orient, the secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the founder and leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt, and the president of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which announced a week-long mourning period in the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq.

Palestinians could delay state proclamation, official says

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian leadership said for the first time Tuesday that it was "studying" a delay of a few weeks in proclaiming an independent state on May 4.

"We are studying an idea presented by friendly countries to delay by two or three weeks the proclamation of our independent state," the Palestinian Minister for International Cooperation

Nabil Shaath told a news conference.

Shaath, one of the main Palestinian negotiators, said the delay was being studied "for tactical reasons," chiefly so as not to influence the Israeli elections, being held on May 17.

Until now, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat had repeated several times that the original date was "sacrosanct." He has

refused to be drawn when asked whether he would agree to a delay, saying only that "everything is under discussion."

The United States, European Union and Egypt have attempted to persuade Arafat to put off his declaration, in order not to play into the hands of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu has threatened to annex most of the West Bank

still remaining under Israeli control should Arafat carry out his plan.

Shaath said that the Palestinians "rejected pressure from friendly countries in favour of a delay in the proclamation of a state until the end of negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories."

Under the 1993 Oslo accord, the negotiations were timed to

end on May 4, but they have not yet started. The Palestinian position is that once the date has passed without agreement, the Oslo arrangements are no longer valid.

Shaath also said the Palestinians had the right to "declare a state in all the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, including east Jerusalem, without Israel's prior agreement."

Ultra-Orthodox rabbis slam supreme court as anti-Semitic

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Ultra-Orthodox rabbis launched a scathing attack on Israel's supreme court Tuesday, branding it "anti-Semitic" and "undemocratic" for recent rulings in favour of religious pluralism.

Several leading rabbis called a press conference Tuesday to lambaste the high court and warn that its rulings could lead to a revolt by the ultra-Orthodox.

"The supreme court judges are antisemitic," charged Rabbi David Yosef, son of the spiritual leader of the powerful ultra-Orthodox party Shas, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef.

The strictly Orthodox are furious with a number of recent high court rulings challenging the Orthodox rabbinic monopoly over conversions to Judaism and other aspects of religious life in Israel.

Rabbi Moshe Gafni of the United Torah Judaism Party

told journalists: "The supreme court is destroying the very foundations of everything we believe in an undemocratic manner unmatched in any other Western country."

"Such institutions exist only in dark dictatorships," Gafni said. The rabbis, whose parties are members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ruling coalition, accused Chief Justice Aharon Barak of being a "left-winger" who was out to punish the ultra-Orthodox for backing the rightist government.

Netanyahu quickly called an impromptu press conference in his Jerusalem office to denounce the attack on the court system, while at the same time calling for dialogue between the ultra-religious and secular in Israel. "The supreme court is the body in charge of enforcing the rule of law and we need to respect the institution and the judges," Netanyahu said.

"All sectors of society need to speak to each other. We need to overcome the differences of opinion and learn to respect a variety of opinions," he said.

Ranin Cohen of the opposition Labour Party announced that he had filed a complaint with the police against the rabbis for alleged incitement to violence against Barak and the other high court justices.

Cohen said their outburst was characteristic of the "undemocratic nature" of Netanyahu's government.

Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein and State Prosecutor Edna Arbel issued a joint statement condemning the rabbis' remarks. "We strongly object to this inappropriate attack on the judicial system and the use of such language, which borders on a criminal offence," they said. The high court infuriated the strictly Orthodox minority in recent months by ruling that local religious councils in Israel must be

open not only to the Orthodox but also to representatives of the liberal Reform and Conservative currents of Judaism.

A lower court also recently authorised Reform rabbis to carry out conversions to Judaism in Israel — a right previously restricted to the Orthodox religious establishment.

Finally the high court ruled that exemptions from military service for Orthodox religious students were illegal. The ultra-Orthodox groups announce they would hold a major demonstration Sunday in Jerusalem to press their protests against the courts.

Ultra-Orthodox Jews make up only about seven per cent of Israel's Jewish population of five million.

But they have a disproportionate clout in Netanyahu's government because their parties provide a parliamentary swing vote which has allowed him to remain in power.



Bedouin Thiba Sadeq Al Hamoud mourns the death of King Hussein, after visiting Her Majesty Queen Noor during a general audience at the Royal Palace in Amman, Tuesday. Both Queen Noor and His Majesty King Abdullah were scheduled to hold audiences for ordinary Jordanians, the day after King Hussein's funeral (AP photo)

Party list for elections boosts Netanyahu's prospects

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party on Tuesday handed him a present he didn't ask for — it chose Sephardic Jews and a woman as its top candidates for parliament.

Netanyahu's hand-picked elderly leadership team was pushed aside in voting by the Likud Central Committee, while newcomers and outspoken Netanyahu critics were given top spots on the Likud slate for the Knesset, Israel's parliament.

Silvan Shalom, 40, appointed a cabinet minister just last year, received the most votes, placing him second behind Netanyahu on the party election list.

Shalom was born in Tunisia and heads the list's strong representation of Sephardic Jews, whose family origins are in Arabic-speaking countries.

Sephardic Jews make up about half of Israel's popula-

tion. In the past, many Sephardic voters have chosen Likud and its hard-line policies toward Arabs over the more moderate Labour Party dominated by Ashkenazi Jews of European descent.

Likud lost its showcase Sephardic candidate when Yitzhak Mordechai, the top vote-getter in 1996 Likud primary elections, quit last month to lead a new centrist party against Netanyahu.

Following his surprise victory, Shalom called on Netanyahu to add him to the party leadership before the elections.

"Finishing first means the people want me at the top," he said.

Netanyahu's top ministers were the big losers. Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon was moved down to the seventh slot.

Moshe Arens, chosen by Netanyahu to replace Mordechai as defence minister last month, came in 25th.

Justice Minister Tsahi Hanegbi, known as Netanyahu's enforcer, expected to finish first. Instead, he finished 11th.

The results are not seen as rejection of Netanyahu by his party. Instead, it appears that the Likud representatives soured on the people around Netanyahu.

Sharon and Arens are both over 70 and of European background.

The 2,700-strong Likud Central Committee preferred younger, Sephardic politicians and women.

Placing second and fourth were veteran cabinet minister, Moshe Katsav and Meir Shalev. Netanyahu's parliamentary coalition chairman, Like Shalom, both are Sephardic Jews.

Third place went to Cabinet Minister Limor Livnat, despite rumours that Netanyahu wanted her left off the list because of their frequent clashes over policy.

Last month she considered leaving Likud. Women also took the sixth and 16th slots.

Analysis said the Sephardic flavour of the Likud list could blunt Mordechai's challenge.

Israelis vote with separate ballots for premier and parliament. The 120 seats in the parliament are divided among the parties in proportion to the number of votes each receives.

Mordechai's centrist party has not chosen its Knesset list. Likud's traditional rival, Labour, is to pick its candidates in primary elections next week.

Labour has been trying to woo veteran Sephardic politician David Levy onto its team, to counter the challenge from Mordechai. The makeup of the new Likud list may add urgency to the quest for Levy's support. Levy was Netanyahu's first foreign minister, but quit a year ago amid disputes over policy.

Officials under fire for representation at funeral

Agencies

PRIME MINISTER Jean Chretien says if he had a bit more warning he could have made the state funeral of King Hussein.

The prime minister returned to Ottawa from a ski trip to Whistler, British Columbia on Monday night and said he had expected Jordanian officials to give him 24 hours notice before the funeral.

He said that when he received 22 1/2 hours notice it was "physically impossible for me to be there in time."

Opposition critics and foreign affairs observers slammed Chretien for missing the most significant state funeral since that of Israel's peacekeeping prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, in 1995.

"Given that so many heads of state chose to go to the funeral, its very likely... by comparison it does look as if Canada is giving the event rather less importance than many of the other countries involved," said Owen Greene, professor of peace studies at the University of Bradford, England.

Canada was represented at the funeral by Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy.

Reform leader Preston Manning said Chretien should have arrived late, rather than not at all.

"I think people would have understood the logistics problem if it caused some delay, but I don't think they'll accept that as a reason for not being there at all," said Manning, who called Chretien's absence an embarrassment for Canada.

The Canadian Arab Federation issued a release citing

its "deep anguish and frustration with the prime minister," calling his absence "a rebuff to 22 Arab countries and a slap in the face to the Arab Canadian community."

Meanwhile, Lebanese newspapers on Tuesday criticised the country's low-level representation at Monday's funeral of King Hussein and the failure of President Emile Lahoud to attend.

The Lebanese government was represented at the funeral, attended by more than 40 heads of state and government, by Deputy Prime Minister Michel Murr.

The independent newspaper Al Nahar said the Lebanese delegation to King Hussein's state funeral was the "lowest-ranking in the Arab World" and "that Lahoud's failure to attend was an indefensible mistake."

Lahoud did visit the Jordanian embassy in Beirut on Tuesday to sign a book of condolences.

The pro-Syrian Al Sharq said the "absence of high-level representation from Lebanon has raised a number of questions."

Another pro-Syrian paper, Al Diyar, said a cooperation pact between Beirut and Damascus, the main powerbroker in neighbouring Lebanon, "calls for Lebanon to be represented at the presidential level when Syria does so."

Albert Mukheiber a former Lebanese minister and MP said King Hussein had been a long-time friend of Lebanon and that he "could not understand how President Lahoud decided that he did not need to deliver his condolences personally."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Union condemns visits to Israel

CAIRO (AP) — The Arab Journalists Union urged its members on Tuesday not to visit Israel and issued a warning that it would take action against such visits in the future. "We condemn such visits and the [general secretariat of the] union will take a decisive action," said a statement by the Cairo-based group after a meeting of its leadership. The group, an umbrella organisation for national journalist syndicates, did not specify the actions it would take. It has made similar threats in the past, but has yet to impose discipline. Banishment from the union could force a journalist out of work.

Israeli spies not to appeal Cypriot sentence

NICOSIA (AFP) — Two Israeli anti-terrorism agents serving three years in a Cypriot prison do not plan to appeal against their sentences but will seek a presidential pardon, their lawyers said Tuesday. Antis Triantafyllides told reporters he had advised the two Israelis, who carried passports in the names of Igal Darnay, 49, and Udi Hargov, 37, not to appeal to the Supreme Court because they had "no chance of succeeding." He said his clients had accepted his advice although they believed the sentence handed down by a court in the coastal town of Larnaca was "severe."

Belaid hopeful urges army neutrality

ALGIERS (R) — Former Algerian Prime Minister Abdesslem Belaid, a candidate for April's presidential election, has urged influential army generals to stay out of politics. "The army is an important institution but not a political one. Its duty is to safeguard the country's unity," Belaid said in an interview published by the Arabic-language Al Youm daily on Tuesday. "If the army slid into the political game then the situation would become dangerous to the army itself and to the nation as a whole," he said.

S. African-Saudi arms deal suspended

CAPE TOWN (AP) — Saudi Arabia's "serious" financial problems have caused the oil-rich kingdom to delay purchasing \$1.5 billion in arms from South Africa, the country's defence minister said Tuesday. Last November, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Abdullah negotiated South Africa's sale to Saudi Arabia of \$1.5 billion of artillery pieces and anti-aircraft missiles, according to diplomats.

Kuwaiti, Russian discuss Iraq

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's foreign minister expressed "deep concern" about the conflict in the Persian Gulf in talks with visiting Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad on Tuesday. Sheikh Sabah also discussed military cooperation with Russia during meetings in Moscow.

Cyprus signs anti-aircraft missiles over to Greece

ATHENS (R) — Cyprus has formally signed over to Greece its controversial Russian S-300 missiles to be deployed on the island of Crete, a defence ministry official said on Tuesday.

He said details of the agreement, signed late on Monday by Greek Defence Minister Akis Tsohatzopoulos and his visiting Cypriot counterpart Yanakakis Christostomis, would

not be made available.

Tsohatzopoulos told reporters before the private signing that the anti-aircraft missiles would be installed on Crete as part of the joint defence pact with Cyprus.

"Greece guarantees the security of Cyprus," he said. "This is the basis of all our efforts." It was not immediately clear whether Greece or Cyprus would be in charge of the defence

system but Greek media reported that it would be installed at the easternmost tip of Crete.

Cyprus ordered the missiles about two years ago but agreed to divert them to Greece in December after threats from Turkey and pressure from the European Union and the United States. Turkey had threatened war should the missiles be deployed on Cyprus and is uneasy about

their being on Crete. EU countries warned they were hurting Cyprus's accession process. Cyprus has been divided since Turkey invaded in 1974 after a coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece. A breakaway Turkish Cypriot state in the north is recognised only by Ankara, which keeps 30,000 troops there.

PRAYER TIMES

05:01Fajr
06:19Sunrise/Duha
11:50Dhuhr
14:53Asr
17:20Maghreb
18:39Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweilfish, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
4622366
Anglican Church Tel.
462853/4624811.
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox
Church Tel. 4771751.
Amman International Church
Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter
Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la
Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel.
4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweilfish
Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the
Department of Meteorology
Moderate weather conditions
will prevail with temperatures
rising slightly and winds
southeasterly moderate. In
Aqaba, it will be moderate to
warm, winds northerly moderate,
and seas calm.

Amman03/16
Aqaba09/23
Deserts02/18
Jordan Valley08/23
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 14, Aqaba 20
Humidity readings: Amman
49 per cent, Aqaba 45 per
cent.

Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyem4630115
Dr. Wissam Hazzayim4748563
Dr. Mumbur Qarimi4779959
Dr. Hatim Hannoun 5153776

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy5661912
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadab Pharmacy5537004
Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh (02)250080
Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)275360
ZARQA:
Dr. Salah Saffarini.....(09)987565
Palestine Pharmacy.....(09)983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre.....4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue
.....4630341
Civil Defence Emergency.....199
Rescue Police 192 4621111 4637777
Fire Brigade.....4617011
Blood Bank.....4775121
Highway Police.....5343402
Traffic Police.....4896390
Public Security Dept.....4630321
Hotel Complaints.....5605800
Price Complaints.....5661176
Water & Sewage Complaints 489467
Amman Municipality Complaints
.....4787111
Telephone Information (directory
assistance)121
Overseas Calls0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs
.....4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs.....5661101
Jordan Television4773111
Radio Jordan4774111
Water Authority.....5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co.....4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Spec-

cial Surgery5921199
The Islamic, Abdali56661317
Hussein Medical Centre.....5856856
Luzmila4630195
Khalidi Maternity.....4644281/6
Akileh Maternity.....464241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity.....4642362
Malhas, J. Amman.....4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5607431
Jordan Hospital5607550
University Hospital5353444
Al-Mushar Hospital 5667279
Al-Ahli, Abdali56641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 477101/3
Al-Bashir4775111/26
Army, Madka4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital.....5157100
Amal Hospital5607155
Al Amal Cancer Centre5353000

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital
.....(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital
.....(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital
.....(09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital
.....(02)275555
Roman Catholic Hospital
.....(02)27275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital
.....(02)7101372, (02)7103101

Rosary Sisters Hospital
.....(02)7102831, (02)7102011
Speciality Hospital(02)7103100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)2041111
FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT
This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia
International Airport Tel.
(44)53200-5, where it should
always be verified. Information on
other flights can be supplied on
phone 44 (52700). Information on
Royal Wings flights can be supplied
on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ)
Flights
08:35Jeddah (RJ)
08:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:55Larnaca (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:25London (RJ)

16:50Istanbul (RJ)
17:30Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
17:55 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
18:40Rome (RJ)
19:05Paris, Berlin (RJ)
23:10Beirut (RJ)
23:59Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights
09:30Cairo (TMS)
10:30Jeddah (SV)
12:30Kuwait (KU)
13:10Tunis (TU)
13:20Bahrain (GF)
14:05Rome (AZ)
15:05Vienna (OS)
15:30Algiers (AH)
18:05 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
18:40Beirut (ME)
19:15Frankfurt (LH)
00:55 London, Damascus (BA)
01:25Athens (OA)
02:00Rome (IAZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
06:50 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA)
(RW)
09:35 Aqaba (arriving at Marka
Airport) (RW)
16:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka
Airport) (RW)
17:45 Haifa (arriving at QAIA)
(RW)
18:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at
QAIA) (RW)

DEPARTURES

06:50Larnaca (RJ)
10:30Rome (RJ)
11:00Istanbul (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
19:35Beirut (RJ)
19:45Colombo (RJ)
20:00 Riyadh, Doha (RJ)
20:15Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:15Bombay (RJ)
20:25Cairo (RJ)
20:35New Delhi (RJ)
21:00Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
21:15Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:45Sanaa (RJ)
Other Flights
06:30Larnaca (CY)
07:25 Damascus, London (BA)
07:25Paris (AF)
10:30Cairo (MS)
12:00Medina, Jeddah (SV)
13:20Kuwait (KU)
14:10Bahrain (GF)
14:10Tunis (TU)
15:30Vienna (OS)
15:30Rome (AZ)
16:20Sharjah (AF)
19:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
00:35Amsterdam (KL)
02:45Athens (OA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Air-
port) (RW)
15:15 Haifa (from Marka Air-
port) (RW)
16:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Air-
port) (RW)
20:30Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Hon

King A
of alle

AMMAN (Petra)
Majesty King
Ben Al Hussein
received a cable
director of the
intelligence. The
GIDI Samir Ha
which he expect
attribution of the
personnel to
Hashemite Thron
Officers at
have dedicated
and work to the
the Hashemite
past and the fu
the nation. W
laval soldiers,
the Hashemite
under your lea
and Baithki.
We pledge to
now to follow m
steps of the fru
are who called

Saudi /
Amman

AMMAN (Petra)
Amman
announced it w
economic and
and said the tw
held talks soon
plans in this res
Saudi Arabi
voted had to Jo
past and it seem
to pro
assistance to
dom," said Sau
of Finance and
Economy (Ibrah
The Saudi mi
spoke to Jordani
after meeting
ster Fayez
Minister of
Michel Marfo
that his co

Al M

AMMAN (J.T.)
Rimawi, the
Majd weekly
on bail pending
next week. He
day.
Rimawi was
insulting the
publishing feli
tion about the
sister and me
government at
the security
Rimawi's
week was giv
sentence. A
prison after h
Publication

Mir

With H
King H
death,
remem
smilin
man w
more
the pe
Minne
the lea
faraw
writes
of the
Star T

ROCK HEST
His Majo
always a
change w
Right h
Maya C
became u
stable v
nearby sh
area's tow
also) was
Nearly
Rochester
the times
King.
Now, w
is being
gracious
friend th
Kingdom
"I think
they knew

FILE - Winter: Ravag Olym Olym of the

King Abdullah receives pledges of allegiance from Jordanian leaders

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein Tuesday received a cable from the director of the General Intelligence Department (GID) Samih Battikhi in which he expressed the allegiance of the GID's personnel to the Hashemite Throne.

"Officers at the GID have dedicated their life and work to the defence of the Hashemite leadership and the nation, working as loyal soldiers, upholding the Hashemite standards under your leadership," said Battikhi.

"We pledge loyalty and vow to follow in the footsteps of the free Jordanians who rallied behind the



founder of the Kingdom and the late King Hussein," added Battikhi.

A similar cable came from the director of the Public Security Department Nasoub Muhieddin. "We are honoured to

renew our allegiance to Your Majesty, pledging before God and Your Majesty to remain faithful soldiers to the Hashemite Throne, wishing you success in pursuing the leadership of this country following in the footsteps of the late King Hussein," said Muhieddin.

The commander of the Palestine Liberation Army Brigadier Faisal Fahum sent a cable to King Abdullah expressing condolences on the passing of the late King Hussein and paying tribute to his achievements and sacrifices to his nation.

He said in the cable the Palestinian people share with Jordanians their grief

and expressed hope that God will bestow upon King Abdullah the strength and power to fulfil his mission.

King Abdullah received a cable from Hamdi Tahha, Chairman of Jordanian Businessmen Association, in which he expressed the association's heartfelt condolences on the passing of King Hussein and congratulated King Abdullah on ascending to the Throne.

In his cables, Tahha said King Hussein has planted in the hearts of the Jordanian people determination and pride with which to confront the challenges of the coming days.

Orphans mourn champion of their cause

By Dana Charkasi

AMMAN — More than 200 grief-stricken orphans living in King Hussein's former palace on Tuesday spoke with pain about having to come to grips with the death of a man who adopted their cause.

"I lost my father, he was like a real father to me," sobbed Ula, 12, as she paid tribute to the late King who, in 1997, donated his Hashemiyah Palace in Hummar as a home for the orphanage after learning of appalling living conditions at the former Al Hussein Institute during a visit there.

There are 230 children, from four months to 14-year old, in the Dar Al Bir — as the orphanage was renamed.

Set high on a hill with

pine trees and shrubs all around, the orphanage overlooks the Jordan Valley and the northern tip of the Dead Sea. But the tranquility of the grounds and the cheerfulness of the children and staff was painfully broken with the news of King Hussein's passing on Sunday.

In a room with around 30 children sitting quietly, two young girls in Islamic dress sat reciting the Holy Koran.

"First, when we heard that His Majesty's health was critical, all the children and employees were very worried," said Tayseer Elias, the orphanage director. "The mood now [after he passed away] is very sad. Some of the substitute mothers fainted when they heard the sorrowful news."

The children were shat-

tered upon hearing that King Hussein had died.

"We had to carry many of the children out of their school buses as they were unable to walk by themselves because of the heavy pain they felt," said one of the nurses at Dar Al Bir.

"Ula had such a shock that she couldn't move or speak for three hours," said Elias, a psychologist who earned his PhD at an American university. He said most of the children cried all the day and the following night. "Many children refused to eat, and their plates went back to the kitchen untouched," a nurse said.

"When I saw a girlfriend crying heavily, I also had to cry," said Yazan, a six-year old boy.

"We explained to the children that, as Muslims,

we have to accept the fact of death, and we encouraged them to read the Holy Koran," Elias added.

Some of the children asked Elias if they could visit the grave of King Hussein and pay their condolences to HRH Princess Zein Al Hussein, who is patron of Dar Al Bir.

"The kids felt very secure here at Dar Al Bir, they felt that King Hussein was their father. We reassure them and say, 'we have Princess Zein and King Abdullah, they will take care of you,'" he said.

"On the day when King Hussein returned to Jordan from the clinic in America, we all went to Dar Al Salam to welcome him back. We were so happy to have him back," Ula added.

Saudi Arabia to resume economic aid to Jordan, Ammari to attend follow-up talks soon

AMMAN (Petra) — Saudi Arabia Monday announced it will resume its economic aid to Jordan and said the two sides will hold talks soon to finalise plans in this respect.

"Saudi Arabia has provided aid to Jordan in the past and it intends to continue to provide such assistance to the Kingdom," said Saudi Minister of Finance and National Economy Ibrahim Assaf.

The Saudi minister, who spoke to Jordan Television after meeting Prime Minister Faysal Tarawneh and Minister of Finance Michel Marto, reaffirmed that his country will

resume its aid to Jordan "in a genuine manifestation of its keenness to deepen brotherly ties between the two countries."

Assaf reviewed with Tarawneh scopes for bolstering economic ties during a meeting held at the Prime Ministry in the presence of Marto and Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Jordan Abdullah Sudeiri.

Assaf presented his condolences to the Jordanian government on the passing of King Hussein and lauded the King's achievements and historic stands.

He said that his meeting with the prime minister

presented an opportunity to review economic relations noting that the discussions covered different aspects of economic cooperation which Assaf said he plans to discuss with the Jordanian ministers of finance and planning soon.

For his part, Marto announced that he and Minister of Planning Nahil Ammari will pay a visit soon to Saudi Arabia to follow up on the talks on economic cooperation.

Saudi Arabia's pledge to offer aid to Jordan followed close on the heels of a visit to Jordan by Saudi Crown Prince

Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz who attended the funeral of King Hussein and who sent a cable to His Majesty King Abdullah pledging support for Jordan.

"Saudi Arabia will firmly stand by you and support you in good and bad times and will use its resources to help Jordan," Prince Abdullah said.

Prince Abdullah voiced his country's support for Jordan and confidence in King Abdullah's ability to lead the nation and said relations between Jordan and Saudi Arabia are stronger than words can describe.

Parents of girl killed by Jordanian soldier name newborn in honour of King Hussein

By Sari Bashi
Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM — Nearly two years ago, Shimon and Ruhama Cohen's lives were shattered when a Jordanian soldier gunned down their daughter and six of her classmates on the Israel-Jordan border.

Now, the couple have a new daughter and have named her Jordan — in honour of King Hussein who paid an extraordinary and moving condolence call to the family during

their darkest hour.

As King Hussein lay critically ill hours before his death, Mrs. Cohen gave birth to the baby girl at Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital Saturday. The King died Sunday after a long battle with cancer.

"We see this as something that connects us to the event, the tragedy that happened, to our sorrow, and also to the King," said Mrs. Cohen in an interview at her hospital bed.

"We wanted to repay our thanks to him and the

recognition that he showed us."

The Cohen's daughter Keren was one of seven girls murdered at "Peace Island" — Baqoura — on the Jordan-Israel border in 1996 by a deranged border guard who was eventually sentenced to life in prison.

King Hussein visited each family in their homes during the Jewish mourning period — a move Israelis saw as a true act of friendship and peace.

"(King Hussein) took it very hard that such a terri-

ble murder happened and that he couldn't offer help and that it happened at the hands of one of his countrymen. He took that great responsibility upon himself and we appreciated this great gesture," said Mrs. Cohen, holding baby Jordan wrapped in pink in her lap.

"He knelt in front of us, really knelt, and he cried, he shed a tear. It hurt him very much," she recalled.

International media descends on Amman to cover news of King Hussein, Jordan

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan's 26-year old Intercontinental Hotel has once again become the Mecca of foreign media that converged here to follow His Majesty King Hussein's medical conditions and to report on the difficult moments that the country is living.

The "Intercon" — as it is better known in the media lingo — established itself as a meeting point for journalists dur-

ing the 1990 Gulf crisis.

But correspondents who have become familiar with Amman through the years agree that the flow of journalists who poured in during the past few days is unprecedented.

"At the moment we have around 200 journalists," said yesterday front desk manager George Badadneh, hardly able to speak between a telephone call and guests to attend.

A total of 450 media representatives are esti-

mated to be in the country at the moment, but many more are expected to come as the whole world looks concerned at the critical conditions of King Hussein.

"Overbooked is the least we can say," Badadneh said.

However, the Intercon could soon lose its quasi-monopoly of foreign media, as many who could not find rooms there turned to the newly-opened Grand Hyatt, conveniently located only a

few hundred metres away from the Intercon, between the Second and Third Circles.

"We only opened four weeks ago, but we already have around 100 journalists," said assistant director of food and beverage Johan Aschan.

The Grand Hyatt has also set up facilities for journalists, and it is currently hosting the European Broadcasting Union, with live uplinks and satellite feed facilities.

Al Majd's Rimawi released on bail

AMMAN (J.T.) — Fahed Rimawi, the editor of Al Majd weekly, was freed on bail pending his trial next week, he said Tuesday.

Rimawi was charged for insulting the monarch, publishing false information about the prime minister and members of the government and attacking the security services.

Rimawi earlier last week was given a 15-day sentence in Jweidah prison after the Press and Publication Department

moved against him.

Rimawi wrote in last week's edition of the paper that HRH Prince Hassan — who was removed as heir to the Throne by King Hussein last month — laid his revolver down in front of King Hussein and asked to be shot if the King believed he was a traitor.

In previous issues, Rimawi had called for the prime minister and his Cabinet to resign.

According to Article 37, paragraph one of the

newly implemented Press and Publications Law of 1998, a publication cannot publish anything that disparages the King or Royal Family members.

Paragraph two of the same article prohibits any publication of any news, views or information that might violate national security. Paragraph nine of the same article stipulates that no publication may publish wrong information or rumours.

According to Al Majd newspaper, Rimawi was

also arrested for an article published earlier by the critical magazine on the Syrian elections.

Qattan, director of the Press and Publications Department, said the attorney general also charges Rimawi for showing loyalty to another country and leader.

According to a source from the newspaper, those cases are the first charges made against the newspaper.

Minnesota residents remember King Hussein's common touch

With His Majesty King Hussein's death, he is being remembered as a smiling, gracious man who seemed more of a friend to the people of Minnesota than the leader of a faraway Kingdom, writes Jill Burcum of the Minneapolis Star Tribune

ROCHESTER, MINN. — In Jordan, His Majesty King Hussein was always a people's King. That didn't change when he came to Minnesota.

Right from his first visit to the Mayo Clinic in 1992, Hussein became one of its most accessible and visible VIPs, chatting with clerks in nearby shops and venturing out to the area's towns. Without question, he also was one of the most popular. Nearly everyone it seems in Rochester can recall with enthusiasm the times they caught glimpse of the King.

Now, with King Hussein's death, he is being remembered as a smiling, gracious man who seemed more of a friend than the leader of a faraway Kingdom.

"I think people here really feel like they knew him," said Leisha Beck-

strom, a Kasson, Minn., woman who works in Rochester. "He just seemed like such a down-to-earth guy."

VIP clinic

The first time King Hussein's souped-up Lockheed L-1011 landed in Rochester, he came to be treated for cancer of the kidney. Since then, he had come back about once a year for checkups. His lengthiest stay was probably last year, when he made Rochester his home base for months while he underwent treatment for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer of the lymphatic system. The cancer killed him early Sunday.

Although the King missed his home, said Marwan Muasher, Jordanian ambassador to Washington, D.C., he viewed the stay in Rochester as a chance to get to know the area and its people better.

"The King liked to visit places and talk to people. He was very approachable," Muasher said. "It was one of the qualities that endeared him to the people of Jordan."

It's also why the people of Rochester viewed him as one of the city's own, said Mayor Chuck Canfield. "He'd been a great friend to the community."

Mayo has been the clinic of choice not only for the King of Jordan — a polygon that lies between Iraq and Israel — but also for many people from the Middle East, including much of its royalty. Mayo generally reveals little about its famous visitors, but it's common knowledge in Rochester that top-ranking leaders from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and the region's other oil-rich nations are patients.

Unlike dignitaries who often limit themselves to meeting others in important posts, Hussein seemed to delight in meeting everyday citizens.

At the Barnes & Noble bookstore,

through which he often liked to stroll, he seemed less interested in books than in talking to the clerks, said Pat Ward, a store manager.

Most of the clerks had met or at least seen the King, he said. Ward himself was setting up a display one day last summer when he saw the suits worn by King Hussein's security guards flash by. Then, King Hussein himself was standing in front of Ward.

"He introduced himself, asked how we were and said it was nice to be here," Ward said. "He seemed a little bit lonely. I think he enjoyed getting out to socialise more than shop."

Doctors also cleared Hussein for several-day trips outside Rochester. Although he never visited the Twin Cities, according to Muasher, he enjoyed driving around southeastern Minnesota.

One place he enjoyed in particular was the Harborview restaurant in Pepin, Wis., which is across the Mississippi River and slightly to the south of Lake City, Minn.

Owner Tom Ahlstrom said the King ate there about five times last summer, becoming in Ahlstrom's eyes a "regular customer."

Ahlstrom said the King liked to sit and watch the river flow by and enjoyed the fall foliage. Often, King Hussein had some privacy at the restaurant because many customers didn't recognise him, Ahlstrom said.

One customer who did was a 10-year-old girl who was a cancer patient at Mayo. After spotting the King, the girl came to Ahlstrom and asked if she could get Hussein's autograph. Ahlstrom relayed the request to the King's security people. Before he and Her Majesty Queen Noor left, they not only gave the girl an autograph but also talked with her for several minutes.

"He was very gracious," said Ahlstrom, who counted himself

among Hussein's admirers. "It was humbling to have someone like the King here."

One of the King's more publicised trips took him last September to Harmony, a small town close to the Iowa border.

According to Evelyn Hingsberger, who works as a local tour guide, King Hussein wanted to see the nearby Amish farms.

He and Queen Noor showed up in a new silver Volkswagen Beetle. They followed Hingsberger as she directed a two-hour tour of the countryside, stopping at an Amish bakery and then at a goat ranch run by Ada Austin of Harmony.

Foreign dignitaries who visit the

'He made me feel like I was doing something important'
— Ada Austin, Harmony, Minn.

ranch are often aloof or even rude, Austin said.

"Some of them can make you feel like you're just an old goat woman," King Hussein was different. He even helped Austin bottle-feed a baby goat.

"He made me feel like I was doing something important," she said.

Congenial customer

Ties between King Hussein and the people of southeast Minnesota were also forged in other ways. Like other

patients, the King needed transportation, hotel rooms, food and other services. Many came to know him by assisting him or those accompanying him. As with those he met simply out of friendliness, he won the hearts of those whose job was to take care of him.

Clements Chevrolet in Rochester provided most of the limousines for his entourage, said Denny Broughton, who manages the dealership's limousine service. Over time, Clements employees came to view Hussein's group as more than clients.

"When you work with the same people for as long as we did, you feel like family," Broughton said.

Last month, Clements staffers were stunned when they learned that the King had returned because his cancer had recurred.

"There were a lot of people in tears when they heard this," Broughton said.

Dan Schafer of Pulver Towing also was saddened to learn of the King Hussein's sudden return Jan. 26.

Last summer, Schafer and a colleague pulled the King's plane out of the mud at the Rochester airport. A framed picture of a company truck towing the plane onto a runway now adorns Pulver's offices.

Schafer didn't meet King Hussein, but another staffer was given a partial tour of the plane. And he doesn't remember whether he received a big tip. Simply having a small role in making the King's stay here a comfortable one made him take an interest in King Hussein's well-being.

"I was really hoping he'd pull through and beat this thing," said Schafer. "He just seemed like a pretty good guy."

Medical ties

King Hussein's presence at Mayo also forged ties between the clinic

and Jordan. In 1995, Mayo established a telemedicine link to a medical centre in Jordan's capital of Amman. In addition, its physicians participated in medical education programmes in Jordan.

"The King had been happy with his care here and encouraged people to come here for treatment," said Muasher.

However, it's the personal connections that appear to be King Hussein's legacy to the community to whom he entrusted his care, Canfield and others said.

Having the King in southeastern Minnesota helped make the towns' citizens more aware of the Middle East and events taking place there. Canfield said. That only increased when the city became centre stage during visits from Israeli leaders Benjamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon.

"I think we felt a real kinship with him and his country," Canfield said.

That has been especially true for John Hamann of Rochester. Knowing the King was here helped the 17-year-old understand the importance of the peace process and the delicacy of the negotiations.

"I've been pretty fortunate to live in a town where all of this has taken place," Hamann said. "I really had a lot of respect for the King. His death is quite a loss, not only to his followers but also to the people of Rochester."

Hingsberger agreed. After guiding King Hussein's tour of Amish farms in September, she met the King once more when he returned to the small town. In December, she was hospitalised in Rochester and received a bouquet from the King and Queen.

"He was not just the King. He was a friend," she said.

— Reprinted from the Minneapolis Star Tribune

France, Britain step up pressure on Kosovo talks

RAMBOUILLET, France (R) — France and Britain, co-sponsors of tough negotiations on peace in Kosovo, stepped up the pressure on Serbian and ethnic Albanian negotiators Tuesday by calling them to account for progress made so far.

Foreign Ministers Hubert Vedrine and Robin Cook scheduled separate meetings with each delegation later Tuesday to add their weight to the search for a settlement.

The news sparked speculation in Rambouillet, a peaceful town southwest of Paris where the talks are being held in a 14th century chateau, that there could be an early snag in the talks, but a spokesman insisted the visit had been planned in advance.

Their visit emphasises the full political weight the co-hosts are throwing behind these talks," said Charles Hay, a British Foreign Office spokesman. The two ministers have made no secret of the fact the three diplomats mediating the closed-door talks face an uphill battle to secure an accord within a two-week deadline.

Western states say they will resort to the ultimate form of pressure — NATO air strikes on Serbian targets — if the talks do not end in an agreement providing substantial autonomy for the ethnic Albanian majority in the southern Serbian province.

Cook and Vedrine attended Saturday's opening ceremony but leave day-to-day negotiations to a troika of international mediators led by U.S. envoy Chris Hill.

Shuffling between the two delegations, the mediators press both sides to scrutinise initial texts put forward by the six-nation Contact Group and find a consensus.

Cloistered in the secluded chateau, the two foes are operating out of different floors in the castle and have so far refused to hold face-to-face discussions.

Rumours and counter-rumours regularly filter out of the closely guarded building, but diplomats insist in-depth deliberations are continuing apace.

The Albanian side has pressed for a formal ceasefire to be signed here, even though a de facto end to hostilities was agreed on as a condition for coming to

ION DE RAMBOUILLET



Special Western envoy Christopher Hill from the United States (centre), Boris Maioriski of Russia (left) and Austrian Wolfgang Peritsch from the European Union give a press conference at Rambouillet. The talks are instigated by the Western powers and set to hammer out a peace plan between the Serbs and ethnic Albanians over the disputed province of Kosovo. Hill said that the talks were "tough, but making progress" (Reuters photo)

Rambouillet in the first place, delegates said. The mediators have rejected the request.

Some delegates reported the Albanians also wanted NATO to be a signatory to the deal, but others denied this. There is no NATO representative at these talks, in contrast to the 1995 Bosnia peace negotiations in Dayton.

Another unclear point is whether Belgrade will demand a separate autonomy status for the small Serbian minority in Kosovo if the ethnic Albanians — who make up 90 per cent of the population there — win wide-ranging self-government.

The conflict in Kosovo, which erupted into open violence almost a year ago,

has cost more than 2,000 lives.

Diplomatic sources said it was highly likely that foreign ministers from the Contact Group, comprising the United States, France, Britain, Germany, Russia and Italy, would descend on Rambouillet at the weekend to see how the talks were going.

The Contact Group wants a three-year interim period of autonomy for the Albanian-majority province, maintenance of Serbian territorial integrity and clearly defined safeguards for all the ethnic groups in Kosovo.

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which is represented at Rambouillet, wants independence for the province.

Protestant splinter group claims N. Ireland pub attack

BELFAST (AFP) — A Protestant militia Tuesday claimed responsibility for a blast that damaged a pub in Castledawson, Northern Ireland.

None of the eight people inside the pub were injured when the bomb went off Monday just after 10:00 p.m. (2100 GMT). The explosive device bounced off bullet-proof windows and damaged the building's front.

The Orange Volunteers, a loyalist splinter group opposing the Northern Ireland peace process, claimed responsibility and vowed to carry out further attacks.

"We were very lucky," the bar's owner Francis McNally said. "Three long-distance lorry drivers from Turkey were sitting right by the window where the device exploded and they were certainly very lucky."

McNally is a former official of Sinn Féin, the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) political wing.

The region around Castledawson, part of Sinn Féin deputy chief Martin McGuinness's constituency, has already been hit three times this year in attacks aimed at the Catholic community.

The attack against the pub

comes amid fears that dissident groups in both Protestant and Catholic camps are taking advantage of the stalled peace process to return to violence.

Meanwhile, so-called "punishment attacks" are on the rise. In these, militia members attempt to cripple — by shooting in the knees, for example — those they consider traitors to their cause.

The level of such attacks has remained high despite the ceasefires which all the main Protestant and Catholic militias signed up to last year as part of the historic April 10 peace accord.

Lawyers for anti-apartheid activist finish fraud defence

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Defence lawyers in the fraud trial of former top African National Congress official Allan Boesak completed their case Tuesday after calling just one witness.

A former minister who once headed the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Boesak is accused of taking more than one million rand (\$300,000 at the time) from the Foundation for Peace and Justice charity he headed.

Donations came from pop singer Paul Simon, Scandinavian aid agencies and other individuals and groups.

Auditor Robert Cameron-Ellis testified for the defence that the charity's accounts were vague and incomplete, making the prosecution's

evidence about embezzlement difficult to verify.

Boesak's lawyer, Mike Maritz, has argued that money withdrawn was in the form of legitimate allowances and expenses. The blame for stolen cash was put on Freddie Steenkamp, Boesak's ex-bookkeeper who is serving six years in jail.

Steenkamp dealt the prosecution case a major blow last year when he withdrew statements implicating Boesak, saying he had lied because of a grudge against his former boss.

After Steenkamp's about turn, a defence motion to dismiss the whole case was turned down, but five of the 32 charges against Boesak were dropped for lack of evidence.

Boesak himself did not

testify. Smiling broadly and saying he was "very happy" with his defence, Boesak told the Associated Press he did not feel it was necessary to take the stand.

"If you look at the state's case and the absolute paucity of evidence, it was not necessary for me to try and respond to any of the allegations," he said.

The brevity of the defence contrasted sharply with the lengthy prosecution case, which called dozens of witnesses and lasted several months.

Judge John Foxcroft postponed the case until Feb. 22 when both sides will sum up their arguments.

Boesak played a prominent role in the anti-apartheid struggle that ended in the country's first all-race elections in 1994.

Nigeria detains officer, mounts inquiry over Sierra Leone

-LAGOS (AFP) — Nigeria's army has detained a lieutenant-colonel over last month's rebel invasion of Sierra Leone's capital Freetown and launched an inquiry prior to a general court martial, a top officer has said.

Nigeria's military rulers were "very annoyed" by the Jan. 6 invasion of Freetown by rebels opposed to President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, Sierra Leonean defence chief Brigadier-General Maxwell Kbohe told the Guardian newspaper published Tuesday.

Nigeria leads and provides the majority of troops for the west African intervention force on ECOMOG which is fighting the rebels, and military leaders saw the incursion as a "big disgrace," Kbohe said.

Kbohe, himself a Nigerian, told the paper in an interview that the army had detained the lieutenant-colonel commanding the 93rd mechanised battalion, responsible for the Kissy area of Freetown, the paper

said. The rebels passed through the eastern Kissy area on their way into the city centre, and were only expelled after heavy fighting in which up to 3,000 civilians and several hundred soldiers died.

The Nigerian army had raised a hoard of inquiry, preliminary to a general court martial, Kbohe said.

"Definitely, the commanding officer failed in his job. There is a hoard of inquiry going on. They will come out with their report and I am sure they will make it public," he said, without naming the officer.

The rebel incursion was "a very big disgrace. It should never have happened like that," he said.

"I tell you, from the head of state down the line in defence headquarters, army, navy and air force, no one is happy about it. They are all very annoyed."

"There is a need to have dedicated officers to do this job ... If we have had a different commanding officer, those rebels wouldn't

have come to Freetown ... at the end of it, the officer moved his troops behind the headquarters he is supposed to defend," said Kbohe.

The Nigerian officer said the Sierra Leonean army had not lacked information on rebel movements, and said it had passed the intelligence on to ECOMOG as it was received.

"We had intelligence information, 100 per cent ... every information that my office had, I passed it to ECOMOG," he said. He reiterated the claim — denied by Monrovia — that Liberian President Charles Taylor is behind the rebels and said that he believed that the former warlord is a threat to the entire region.

If Freetown had fallen to rebels backed by Liberia, "the next place was to be Guinea. After Guinea, the rebels will come to Ghana since they have their troops in Sierra Leone. Then after Ghana it will be Nigeria. That is what their plan is," he said.

Second trial begins for Singapore free speech advocate

SINGAPORE (AP) — Fresh from a seven-day jail term, free speech advocate Chee Soon Juan went on trial again Tuesday on a charge of speaking publicly without a permit and questioned police about how they control political speeches.

Chee, head of the 200-member Singapore Democratic Party, is challenging Singapore's public speech law as unconstitutional and arguing that it is unfairly applied against opposition parties.

The trial was expected to finish Wednesday. It began with a setback for the defence, when District Judge Mavis Chieng rejected a request for records of how the police had dealt with previous permit applications.

Since Chee did not seek a licence for his Jan. 5 address to a lunchtime crowd at Raffles Place in the central business district, the judge said it was irrelevant how past requests had been handled.

Acting as his own attorney, Chee questioned an officer who had monitored his speech, eliciting testimony that police never grant permits for outdoor political speeches.

Wong Hong Toy, the party's assistant secretary general, was also on trial.

charged with abetting Chee in breaking the law by adjusting the loudspeaker during an address to a peaceful crowd of about 600.

The maximum fine for the offence is 5,000 Singapore dollars (\$3,012). But if either man is assessed a fine or more than 2,000 Singapore dollars (\$1,190) he would also face a five-year ban against running for office.

Chee was released from prison Monday after serving a seven-day term for a Dec. 29 speech at the same place. He went to jail after refusing to pay a 1,400 Singapore dollars (\$833) fine, and said he was prepared for incarceration again if convicted this week.

Chee said he would plead innocent later Tuesday at arraignment on another charge — of illegally selling his book about Asian political dissidents. Chee has said sales of the book, "To be free," are his main source of income.

Taiwanese legislator Shih Ming-Teh, a former dissident who spent 25 years in prison and is profiled in Chee's book, attended the trial. He told a news conference Monday he wanted to support Chee. The trial opened with a

request from Wong's attorney, Ling How Doong, for records of past applications for permits under the Public Entertainments Act, which is applied to political speeches in Singapore.

The defendants' case is that police have routinely denied or delayed issuing permits to opposition parties. Chee has said that because most avenues of disseminating his political views are restricted, he had little choice but to ignore the permit requirement and address the crowd.

Prosecutor Bala Reddy argued: "The motives of the accused in not applying for a licence are irrelevant." He said the only issue was that Chee had made a public speech, and had no licence.

Ling responded: "My contention is that the scheme of licensing is unconstitutional. If that is so, where is the necessity to apply for a licence?"

The ruling People's Action Party, which has dominated Singapore for 40 years, maintains tight controls on speech, assembly, the press and other aspects of civic life. The party and government leaders say the restrictions are necessary to avoid unrest in the multiracial and multireligious nation of 3.1 million.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Indonesia has yet to find Suharto assets overseas'

JAKARTA (AFP) — The initial findings of an investigation by the attorney general's office and the foreign ministry have failed to find any wealth or assets belonging to former president Suharto abroad, a report said Tuesday. "The foreign ministry has submitted a report to the attorney general's office that included a preliminary conclusion that there has not yet been any wealth belonging to former president Suharto overseas," Attorney General Andi Muhammad Ghalib said according to the Antara news agency. He said the search had sought to uncover Suharto's wealth in the form of bank accounts and time deposits as well as land and properties. The foreign ministry report, dated Feb. 2, covered the results of an investigation by Indonesian missions in 16 cities abroad, including in Europe, in Asia, in the Middle East, in North America and in Pacific region. Suharto, who resigned as president under mounting public pressure in May, is currently being investigated for possible corruption, collusion and nepotism. He has so far been questioned over the many charity foundations that he has chaired and over his "national car" policy that involved a company controlled by one of his sons.

Eleven people executed in Xinjiang

BEIJING (AFP) — Eleven people including a Muslim separatist have been executed in China's remote northwest Xinjiang region charged with various crimes, press reports said. The 11 accused were executed last Wednesday after their sentences were upheld by the High Court of Xinjiang and China's Supreme Court. The Xinjiang Metropolis News daily received here Tuesday said. They were convicted by a court in the Xinjiang capital Urumqi, on various charges of theft, rape, drug trafficking, gun running and organised crime. The executions in Urumqi come amid tensions in the far northwest region between the majority Uighur Muslim population and the minority Han Chinese. China accuses many Uighurs of working to separate the region from the mainland. One man, identified by the paper as Rehmetullah Abitbulah, was sentenced to 12 years for organising so-called splittist activities, two years on charges of theft and harbouring of weapons, and handed the death sentence for theft. Two other convicts, Ainiwa'er Niyazi and Rehmetullah Ku'erban, were executed for premeditated murder, according to the report. Xinjiang authorities Friday announced the executions of two Muslim separatists in the Yili prefecture, located along the Kazakhstan border region. Xinjiang has some 17 million people and Uighurs make up 48 per cent of the population, but the proportion has continued to fall in the face of waves of new Han Chinese immigrants who now comprise 38 per cent of the population.

Immigrants with nonviolent criminal records to be released

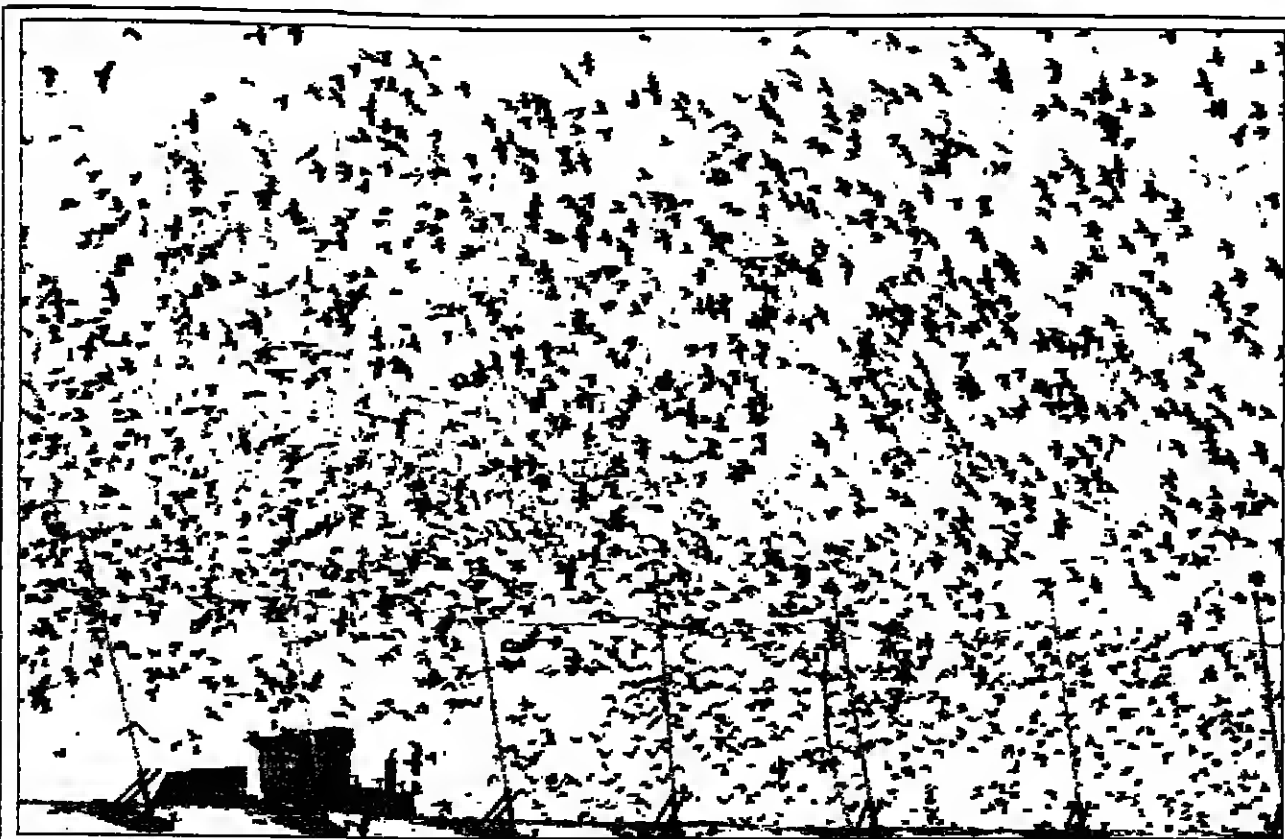
MIAMI (AP) — The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) plans to release 1,500 immigrants with nonviolent criminal records to ease what a spokesman called overcrowding in its Eastern Region facilities. INS spokesman Dan Kane said the detained immigrants will be released next Monday, the Miami Herald reported Tuesday. The 1,500 people represent nearly one-fourth of all detainees in the region that includes Florida and 24 other states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. "We will release only those immigrants who INS believes, following a thorough case-by-case review, are not a threat to public safety in Miami or any other community around the nation," Kane said. The agency will not release "terrorists, rapists or murderers, or any other violent criminals into the community," he said. Nationwide, INS has about 16,000 people in custody, triple the number it had before Congress enacted the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act in 1996. That act made it almost impossible for legal immigrants convicted of certain non-violent crimes to stay in the United States. It also required the INS to detain those immigrants instead of allowing the release of those who are not believed to pose any danger. The agency had a two-year grace period during which it was not required to lock up such immigrants. But that expired last year, and Congress rejected the agency's request to extend the grace period. The housing crunch is worst in the agency's Eastern Region, Kane said. There is funding for 5,434 beds, but the INS is detaining 6,500 people. "We no longer have space and we have to create space," Kane said. "We did not receive appropriate funding to carry our mission." INS will release the immigrants to their families or non-governmental agencies with contacts with the agency. They will be required to report regularly to local deportation officers. Kane said detention centres throughout the region will keep immigrant felons as long as there is space, but if the agency runs into a situation where they need space again, they will release more people.

Social worker killed in Karachi

KARACHI (AFP) — An elderly female social worker was gunned down by unidentified assailants Tuesday in Pakistan's troubled port city of Karachi, police and family sources said. Naheed Farzana, 50, was shot dead at her home in the city's Liaquatabad district, police said, describing it as "targeted" killing. The assailants sprayed her with bullets from outside after she refused to open the gate, a family member said. Police said an investigation was under way. Family sources said the deceased had no political affiliation. Farzana's brother-in-law, Naqem Hasni, a local leader of former Premier Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), and his son were killed by gunmen last year. PPP leaders condemned her killing. Karachi has a history of political, ethnic and sectarian violence that has claimed more than 3,500 lives during the last three years. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif imposed direct federal rule in October on southern Sindh province, of which Karachi is the capital. Military courts have been established in Karachi in a crackdown on terrorism and violence. Violence has subsided after police rounded up hundreds of suspected criminals over the past three months.

Monkeys take to raiding Thai homes

BANGKOK (AP) — Hundreds of wild monkeys have been raiding villages in northeastern Thailand for food after official supplies earmarked for them ran out, a local official said Tuesday. The hungry animals have even invaded the houses of residents in Ban Wan and Muang Can villages in Sisaket province, 430 kilometres northeast of Bangkok, said Suchitra Chantamee, a Si Sakti district officer. "They take whatever they can find on, from sticky rice to bananas in the backyard," she said. An estimated 2,000 wild monkeys live in degraded forests around the villages. They began to go hungry several months ago after the local administration stopped feeding them because they ran out of food and received no budget for new provisions. The local government in the past had allocated 10,000 baht (\$275) a year for feeding the monkeys as the animals have had difficulty finding food in the degraded forests, said Suchitra. She said the villagers are hoping new funds will be approved soon so that the monkeys will not hang around in their yards and on their roofs. "They can bite if you resist," she said. "However, there are no report of monkeys hurt by villagers or vice versa."



The sky over one of Leipzig's garbage depots is filled with thousands of hungry crows who have flown from north Russia and neighbouring Baltic countries for better food prospects in the bitter winter. While they flock to the big cities for morsels, the crows that normally inhabit central Europe countries head further south for presumably richer pickings (AFP photo)

Indian state leader quits over attacks on Christians

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The chief minister of India's Orissa state announced Tuesday he had resigned over anti-Christian violence, including the brutal murder of an Australian missionary.

Jayanti Ballabh Patnaik told reporters in his home state that he had submitted his resignation to Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi Monday.

Patnaik, a Hindu, heads the Congress administration in the eastern state.

"It is for Gandhi to take a decision on the resignation," the United News of India (UNI) quoted him as saying.

A visibly-upset Patnaik

did not answer further questions, UNI said. It was not clear if the resignation had also been sent to the governor of Orissa — a constitutional requirement.

The Congress, India's main opposition party but which rules some states, confirmed the development.

"He has put in his papers and left it to Gandhi to take a decision," Congress general secretary Madhavrao Scindia said in New Delhi. "Within a couple of days, we will get to know more on the development."

"Patnaik has resigned in the exemplary spirit of owning moral responsibility," Orissa was the site of

the gruesome killings on Jan. 22 of Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons — hurned to death in their car by a Hindu mob.

Last week, a Catholic nun in Orissa was allegedly raped after she was offered a ride in a taxi by two men, while two young Christian triahls were murdered Sunday.

The Orissa incidents followed a wave of arson attacks on churches and missionary schools in the western state of Gujarat over Christmas.

Church leaders have complained of an organised campaign of violence against their tiny community and accused

the ruling Hindu nationalists of appeasing the militants behind the attacks.

Hindus form about 83 per cent of India's 975 million population. Muslims make up around 15 per cent, while Christians account for a little more than two per cent.

Newspapers reported earlier that Patnaik had submitted his resignation to Gandhi after she reportedly told him that the attacks on Christians in Orissa had made his position untenable.

The Indian Express said Gandhi's decision was the "most drastic" since she became president of the Congress in April last year.

3 former ministers stand trial in saga of AIDS-tainted blood

PARIS (AP) — Former Prime Minister Laurent Fabius appeared before a French court Tuesday on the opening day of the trial of three ex-ministers linked to a scandal involving the use of AIDS-tainted blood in transfusions.

Wearing a dark grey suit and black tie, a sombre-looking Fabius — a former prime minister and current speaker of parliament — entered the courtroom accompanied by his lawyers.

Fabius, former Health Minister Edmond Herve and former Social Affairs Minister Georgina Dufoix were all to appear before the special court, the first time since World War II that government ministers are being tried for their official acts.

The three are charged with having a role in the deaths of five people from AIDS and the infection of two others in 1985.

Before the trial's opening, representatives of people who have contracted AIDS from transfusions gathered outside the courtroom.

"The rules of the trial are completely unfair," said Olivier

Duplessis, president of the French Association of Transfusion Victims, who complained that families of victims could not take part in the proceedings.

The president of the French Association of Haemophiliacs, Edmond-Luc Henri, said he felt "serene" as the trial was about to begin.

"It is not a political trial, but the search for responsibility of men and women who happened to be ministers at the time," Henri told reporters.

Nearly 4,000 people in France contracted AIDS from transfusions in the early 1980s. An experts' report in 1991 showed that about 300 contaminations were "avoidable."

Four health officials already have been convicted in previous trials. This is the first time the courts will judge the accountability of top government officials.

The three are to stand before a special Court of Justice of the Republic that judges officials for crimes committed in office.

Three judges and 12 legislators are sitting in judgment of the ministers in a trial expected to last a

minimum of three weeks.

The three, all served under Socialist President Francois Mitterrand from 1984-86, when AIDS was surfacing as a modern-day plague.

All three, and Fabius in particular, are charged with employing a "strategy of favouritism" that delayed systematic testing for AIDS, using an American-made test, until a French test was ready.

The American test, manufactured by Abbott Laboratories, was available in March 1985. But it was not until Aug. 1, 1985 that systematic testing of blood donors went into effect in France — on Fabius' orders — using a French test by Diagnostics Pasteur.

The defendants say they never knowingly approved the use of contaminated blood products in transfusions.

"In my soul and conscience, in the deepest part of my being and before God, I do not feel guilty," Dufoix has said.

The ex-ministers are accused of involuntary homicide and "attacking the physical integrity of others." They risk up to five years in prison and a maximum fine of

500,000 francs (\$90,000) on the first count and up to three years in prison and a maximum fine of 300,000 francs (\$55,000) on the second.

Dufoix and Herve are accused of a delay in making available imported — and costly — heated blood products, cleansed of the virus, instead of allowing no-heated blood with "100 per cent contamination" to circulate.

The extent of the scandal was revealed in a government-ordered report released in September 1991. The report showed that ranking health officials knowingly allowed tainted blood products to be used in transfusions.

Last year, the special court's investigative commission concluded that authorities were aware of potential contamination of blood products by early 1985, "sufficient time for a rapid reaction." It also took the ministers to task for failing to import expensive heat-treated blood free of the AIDS virus.

Heating blood products to deactivate the virus was practised in Germany and the United States by 1983.

U.S. will not attend Myanmar heroin conference

BANGKOK (AFP) — The United States has decided not to attend a major international heroin conference in Myanmar, dealing a critical blow to the junta's hopes of shedding its image as a "narco-dictatorship."

A U.S. source told AFP Tuesday that Washington's decision was motivated by a desire to avoid any misunderstandings of its policy.

"The United States believes that the Burmese regime could use the conference to create the false impression that it demonstrates international approval by Interpol and participating countries of its narcotics performance," the source said.

"The U.S. wants to avoid any misinterpretation of its policy towards Burma (Myanmar)," said the source.

"Burma's anti-narcotics efforts, while improving, are far from what is necessary. Burma persists in its

disregard for political and human rights."

The U.S. was considering sending representatives of its Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to the meeting, according to media reports, but its decision means there will be no U.S. representative at the meeting.

The decision leaves the credibility of the Feb. 23-26 conference in serious doubt following similar moves by Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and Denmark, diplomatic sources here said.

France and Germany are the only European nations still expected to attend, diplomatic sources said here.

In the run-up to the conference in recent weeks, Myanmar's official press has carried almost daily reports of drugs seizures and the junta's anti-narcotics drive.

The tactic is evidence of the government's determination to use the

conference to add a sheen of legitimacy to its 15-year anti-drugs campaign announced late last year, one observer said.

Myanmar rejects claims that its counter-narcotics record makes it an incongruous choice to host the conference.

"This is Interpol and the conference is here to show the participation of the Myanmar government in trying to eradicate drugs," Yangon Interpol representative Police Colonel Win Kyi told AFP.

Twenty-one nations had confirmed they would attend the meeting, he said.

The most recent United States Country Commercial Guide published last year described Myanmar, as "the world's largest source of illicit opium" with output estimated at 2,365 metric tonnes in 1997.

Opium is reportedly smuggled out along trafficking routes in the notorious Golden Triangle drugs

zone grouping parts of Thailand, Myanmar and Laos, to supply the cravings of addicts in cities across the globe.

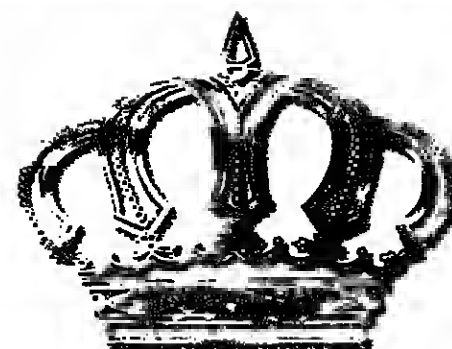
Other Western nations have also accused Myanmar of cosyng up to drug lords following the surrender of warlord Khun Sa to the military regime two years ago.

Khun Sa, along with other alleged narcotics traffickers, is believed to live in Yangon under the protection of military intelligence after his insurgent Mong Tai Army cut a ceasefire deal with the government.

Myanmar analysts say that although there is no clear evidence to link the military government with narcotics trafficking, drugs money has clearly infiltrated the economy.

Drug lords have been accused of financing legitimate businesses with the ill-gotten gains of drug trading.

**The Managing Director
Of
Siemens AG — Jordan Branch
Georg Schmid and all Employees
Wish to express their deepest sorrow
at the passing
Of
His Majesty
King Hussein Ben Talal
And extend their deepest condolences to
His Majesty
King Abdullah Ben Al-Hussein,
The Royal Hashemite Family
and the Jordanian people.
His Majesty King Hussein
will be greatly missed.
May God Rest His Soul in Peace**



An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation Established 1975
 ٢٠١٥-٢٠١٦
 ٢٠١٦-٢٠١٧
 ٢٠١٧-٢٠١٨
 ٢٠١٨-٢٠١٩
 ٢٠١٩-٢٠٢٠
 ٢٠٢٠-٢٠٢١
 ٢٠٢١-٢٠٢٢
 ٢٠٢٢-٢٠٢٣
 ٢٠٢٣-٢٠٢٤
 ٢٠٢٤-٢٠٢٥
 ٢٠٢٥-٢٠٢٦
 ٢٠٢٦-٢٠٢٧
 ٢٠٢٧-٢٠٢٨
 ٢٠٢٨-٢٠٢٩
 ٢٠٢٩-٢٠٣٠
 ٢٠٣٠-٢٠٣١
 ٢٠٣١-٢٠٣٢
 ٢٠٣٢-٢٠٣٣
 ٢٠٣٣-٢٠٣٤
 ٢٠٣٤-٢٠٣٥
 ٢٠٣٥-٢٠٣٦
 ٢٠٣٦-٢٠٣٧
 ٢٠٣٧-٢٠٣٨
 ٢٠٣٨-٢٠٣٩
 ٢٠٣٩-٢٠٤٠
 ٢٠٤٠-٢٠٤١
 ٢٠٤١-٢٠٤٢
 ٢٠٤٢-٢٠٤٣
 ٢٠٤٣-٢٠٤٤
 ٢٠٤٤-٢٠٤٥
 ٢٠٤٥-٢٠٤٦
 ٢٠٤٦-٢٠٤٧
 ٢٠٤٧-٢٠٤٨
 ٢٠٤٨-٢٠٤٩
 ٢٠٤٩-٢٠٥٠
 ٢٠٥٠-٢٠٥١
 ٢٠٥١-٢٠٥٢
 ٢٠٥٢-٢٠٥٣
 ٢٠٥٣-٢٠٥٤
 ٢٠٥٤-٢٠٥٥
 ٢٠٥٥-٢٠٥٦
 ٢٠٥٦-٢٠٥٧
 ٢٠٥٧-٢٠٥٨
 ٢٠٥٨-٢٠٥٩
 ٢٠٥٩-٢٠٦٠
 ٢٠٦٠-٢٠٦١
 ٢٠٦١-٢٠٦٢
 ٢٠٦٢-٢٠٦٣
 ٢٠٦٣-٢٠٦٤
 ٢٠٦٤-٢٠٦٥
 ٢٠٦٥-٢٠٦٦
 ٢٠٦٦-٢٠٦٧
 ٢٠٦٧-٢٠٦٨
 ٢٠٦٨-٢٠٦٩
 ٢٠٦٩-٢٠٧٠
 ٢٠٧٠-٢٠٧١
 ٢٠٧١-٢٠٧٢
 ٢٠٧٢-٢٠٧٣
 ٢٠٧٣-٢٠٧٤
 ٢٠٧٤-٢٠٧٥
 ٢٠٧٥-٢٠٧٦
 ٢٠٧٦-٢٠٧٧
 ٢٠٧٧-٢٠٧٨
 ٢٠٧٨-٢٠٧٩
 ٢٠٧٩-٢٠٨٠
 ٢٠٨٠-٢٠٨١
 ٢٠٨١-٢٠٨٢
 ٢٠٨٢-٢٠٨٣
 ٢٠٨٣-٢٠٨٤
 ٢٠٨٤-٢٠٨٥
 ٢٠٨٥-٢٠٨٦
 ٢٠٨٦-٢٠٨٧
 ٢٠٨٧-٢٠٨٨
 ٢٠٨٨-٢٠٨٩
 ٢٠٨٩-٢٠٩٠
 ٢٠٩٠-٢٠٩١
 ٢٠٩١-٢٠٩٢
 ٢٠٩٢-٢٠٩٣
 ٢٠٩٣-٢٠٩٤
 ٢٠٩٤-٢٠٩٥
 ٢٠٩٥-٢٠٩٦
 ٢٠٩٦-٢٠٩٧
 ٢٠٩٧-٢٠٩٨
 ٢٠٩٨-٢٠٩٩
 ٢٠٩٩-٢١٠٠
 ٢١٠٠-٢١٠١
 ٢١٠١-٢١٠٢
 ٢١٠٢-٢١٠٣
 ٢١٠٣-٢١٠٤
 ٢١٠٤-٢١٠٥
 ٢١٠٥-٢١٠٦
 ٢١٠٦-٢١٠٧
 ٢١٠٧-٢١٠٨
 ٢١٠٨-٢١٠٩
 ٢١٠٩-٢١١٠
 ٢١١٠-٢١١١
 ٢١١١-٢١١٢
 ٢١١٢-٢١١٣
 ٢١١٣-٢١١٤
 ٢١١٤-٢١١٥
 ٢١١٥-٢١١٦
 ٢١١٦-٢١١٧
 ٢١١٧-٢١١٨
 ٢١١٨-٢١١٩
 ٢١١٩-٢١٢٠
 ٢١٢٠-٢١٢١
 ٢١٢١-٢١٢٢
 ٢١٢٢-٢١٢٣
 ٢١٢٣-٢١٢٤
 ٢١٢٤-٢١٢٥
 ٢١٢٥-٢١٢٦
 ٢١٢٦-٢١٢٧
 ٢١٢٧-٢١٢٨
 ٢١٢٨-٢١٢٩
 ٢١٢٩-٢١٣٠
 ٢١٣٠-٢١٣١
 ٢١٣١-٢١٣٢
 ٢١٣٢-٢١٣٣
 ٢١٣٣-٢١٣٤
 ٢١٣٤-٢١٣٥
 ٢١٣٥-٢١٣٦
 ٢١٣٦-٢١٣٧
 ٢١٣٧-٢١٣٨
 ٢١٣٨-٢١٣٩
 ٢١٣٩-٢١٤٠
 ٢١٤٠-٢١٤١
 ٢١٤١-٢١٤٢
 ٢١٤٢-٢١٤٣
 ٢١٤٣-٢١٤٤
 ٢١٤٤-٢١٤٥
 ٢١٤٥-٢١٤٦
 ٢١٤٦-٢١٤٧
 ٢١٤٧-٢١٤٨
 ٢١٤٨-٢١٤٩
 ٢١٤٩-٢١٥٠
 ٢١٥٠-٢١٥١
 ٢١٥١-٢١٥٢
 ٢١٥٢-٢١٥٣
 ٢١٥٣-٢١٥٤
 ٢١٥٤-٢١٥٥
 ٢١٥٥-٢١٥٦
 ٢١٥٦-٢١٥٧
 ٢١٥٧-٢١٥٨
 ٢١٥٨-٢١٥٩
 ٢١٥٩-٢١٦٠
 ٢١٦٠-٢١٦١
 ٢١٦١-٢١٦٢
 ٢١٦٢-٢١٦٣
 ٢١٦٣-٢١٦٤
 ٢١٦٤-٢١٦٥
 ٢١٦٥-٢١٦٦
 ٢١٦٦-٢١٦٧
 ٢١٦٧-٢١٦٨
 ٢١٦٨-٢١٦٩
 ٢١٦٩-٢١٧٠
 ٢١٧٠-٢١٧١
 ٢١٧١-٢١٧٢
 ٢١٧٢-٢١٧٣
 ٢١٧٣-٢١٧٤
 ٢١٧٤-٢١٧٥
 ٢١٧٥-٢١٧٦
 ٢١٧٦-٢١٧٧
 ٢١٧٧-٢١٧٨
 ٢١٧٨-٢١٧٩
 ٢١٧٩-٢١٨٠
 ٢١٨٠-٢١٨١
 ٢١٨١-٢١٨٢
 ٢١٨٢-٢١٨٣
 ٢١٨٣-٢١٨٤
 ٢١٨٤-٢١٨٥
 ٢١٨٥-٢١٨٦
 ٢١٨٦-٢١٨٧
 ٢١٨٧-٢١٨٨
 ٢١٨٨-٢١٨٩
 ٢١٨٩-٢١٩٠
 ٢١٩٠-٢١٩١
 ٢١٩١-٢١٩٢
 ٢١٩٢-٢١٩٣
 ٢١٩٣-٢١٩٤
 ٢١٩٤-٢١٩٥
 ٢١٩٥-٢١٩٦
 ٢١٩٦-٢١٩٧
 ٢١٩٧-٢١٩٨
 ٢١٩٨-٢١٩٩
 ٢١٩٩-٢٢٠٠

Responsible Editor
Elia Nasrallah

Web Site: <http://www.access2arabia.com/jordantimes/>

And because of him, I once again believe such things are possible.

Al Dustour's Oreib Rintawi said Syria's attendance to mourn Jordan for His Majesty King Hussein was distinguished and surprising. Syria announced a three-day mourning period and delayed the poll on the presidency of Hafez Assad, whose attendance was a delightful surprise, said Rintawi, pointing out that Assad has not visited Jordan for years, the relations with Jordan have witnessed ups and downs, and neither of the two countries think they are responsible for the bad relations. But these differences are not impossible to resolve, contended the writer. Jordan has stood by Syria in several circumstances, and perhaps the Kingdom will continue this policy. Monday's meeting of all powers in the world, whether friends or foes, while mourning King Hussein, is strong evidence of His Majesty's stature, said the writer.

King Abdullah, the government, and the Jordanian people together must forge a decisive new strategy to address these crucial issues. King Hussein's profound legacy is not a blueprint to be copied, for from his personality and state he forged a unique response to the particular demands of his days. Rather, King Hussein's legacy offers a set of enduring principles and values that can continue to motivate our quest for sustainable nationhood. The most important of these values is the ordinary citizen's feeling that his or her human dignity matters, that state and society treat them with a predictable degree of justice and fairness.

This is why Jordanians cried, and stood in the rain and cold to honour King Hussein, and why

Palestine. wrote on
 February 3 that "now that
 proposition may be a step
 closer to coming true in a
 political as well as demo-
 graphic sense." He argued
 that the if the Palestinian
 leader "can succeed in poi-
 soning relations between
 Israel and its only friendly
 neighbour (Jordan), his bar-
 gaining position (with
 Israel) may be much
 stronger," adding "even
 more so if, as seems likely,
 the progress of democracy
 further strengthens the
 Palestinian community
 within Jordan itself." In
 other words, "Don't be sur-
 prised if Mr. Arafat sees this
 as yet another reason not to
 hurry a 'final settlement'
 with Israel on his own." The
 unexpected participation of
 Syrian President Assad and
 the presence of Palestinian
 leader Arafat, who was
 reported to be ill a day ear-
 lier, at the spectacular
 funeral of the Jordanian
 Monarch, may have been
 intended to nip in the bud
 such futile speculation.

powerful voice for peace. King Hussein earned the respect and gratitude that only a man of conscience, bravery, and remarkable charisma may lay claim to. I know that I speak for many in supporting the new King Abdullah in his stewardship of Jordan through the turbulent times ahead. If he can draw upon the strength and wisdom so evident in his father, the future is encouraging.

Bob Stolkin
U.S.

Letters of condolence

IN THE early 1980's, the American Jewish Congress was the first Jewish organisation to receive and accept an invitation from the Kingdom of Jordan to visit that country and to meet with its leaders. We were pleased to be received by the Prime Minister and then by His Majesty, King Hussein. This began a relationship between us and the King that became deeper and warmer with the passing years. Each time we saw King Hussein there was no mistaking that he was a King. There was also no mistaking that he was a warm, unmistakably decent, and sympathetic human being. Consequently, we feel a special sense of loss at his untimely death.

With King Hussein's passing, Israel and the Jewish people have lost a true friend. The Middle East has lost a peacemaker. The world has lost a unique example of how wisdom combines with statesmanship.

King Hussein has destroyed for all time the simplistic notion that Arab leaders are necessarily hostile to Jewish concerns. Like his grandfather before him, who was assassinated because he dared to think of living in peace with Israel, King Hussein realised that Israel was a permanent reality and that Jordan and the Jewish state were destined to share the future.

Even as we extend our heartfelt condolences to King Hussein's wife, Queen Noor, to his children and to his people, we also express our confidence that the reign of his heir, King Abdullah, will be notable for the same combination of humanity and devotion to the cause of peace that marked the life of his father.

We hardly thought that we would be using this phrase again so soon; it has come to have for us a precious and singular meaning. But King Hussein was an intimate with Yitzhak Rabin in the tireless pursuit of peace. And so, with all respect, we can think of no more fitting way to say farewell than, Shalom, Chaver,

Jack Rosen/President
Phil Baurin/Executive Director
David Clayman/Israel director

LET MINE be one more small voice among many mourning the passing of your great King. Let my prayer be one more among many thanking Almighty God for the life of this good and great man. And let people of good will the world over add a special prayer tonight for the heret son who bears the Crown, and carries the burden and the promise of peace.

Peter D. Fenzel
New York, NY
U.S.

I AM so sorry the King has passed away. May the Lord be with Queen Noor and his son, King Abdullah. I have learned much about Jordan through time, and King Hussein seemed to be a true man of peace. Our president showed great affection for him. You truly have a beautiful country. Our prayers are with you.

Gary Cadwell
U.S.

I AM writing to express our most sincere sympathies to Queen Noor, the Royal Family and to the Jordanian people for the loss of King Hussein. I do not think that there has ever in history been one so honoured and respected as His Majesty.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you all today and always.

Gloria Roehr-Hyzer, N.D. and Family
Cushing, Wisconsin
U.S.

I HOPE that time will heal your nation. I am an American who respected your beloved King who just passed away. God bless the new King and Jordan.

Wm T Capps
Jessup, Maryland
U.S.

AS AN American currently living and working in Amman I have been following the sad events surrounding the illness and death of His Majesty King Hussein closely, both here in Jordan and in my home state of Minnesota via the Internet. We all have lost a King, a King to the people of the world.

John C. Mitchell
International School of Choueifat
Amman

I AM greatly saddened by the death of King Hussein and I wish to extend my deepest sympathy and prayers to his family and the people of Jordan.

I have respected and admired him for many years along with many other Americans.

His tireless efforts to promote peace, his leadership, and his qualities as a human being are an inspiration to people everywhere. He touched the hearts of people around the world and his passing is a very sad day for the world. I share the feelings of grief and sorrow that are felt by the Jordanian people and I pray that God will give King Abdullah the strength, courage, and compassion that he will need in his new role.

Linda Mowatt
Alaska

WE ARE truly sorry for the death of your beloved King, a true philanthropist. His warmth and magnanimity radiated through the world, like a beacon in the darkness. He will be sorely missed.

Fiona and Peter Daly
U.K.

WE WOULD like to send our condolences for the death of HM King Hussein.

Gudrun & Rik Van Lent
Doha
Qatar



I DEEPLY sympathise with the people of Jordan for they have lost a great King.

May he rest in peace and let his spirit be present forever in the Kingdom of Jordan and the Middle East.

Robert Smies
Netherlands

WHEN I heard the news out of Jordan that King Hussein has died it made me and my family very sad. I pray to God to give him a place in Paradise.

S. Arif Hussein Shah and family
U.S.

I, ALONG with so many American's, feel your grief of the loss of King Hussein. He was a hero of mine since I was a little girl. I hope in my heart that we can continue to work for peace all over the world in his name. Thank you for letting the world watch the funeral, and feel that we were there with you. Please support King Abdullah in carrying on his father's causes. King Abdullah and the people of Jordan will be the key to peace in the Middle East and everywhere in the world.

Juli Eggers
Las Vegas NV
U.S.

OUR DEEPEST sincere condolences on the death of our King and the apostle of peace His Majesty King Hussein. We are all overwhelmed by sadness and grief over the loss of King Hussein, may God bestow mercy on his soul.

We extend our sympathy and love to His Majesty King Abdullah, Queen Noor, the Royal Family and to the people of Jordan during this very hard time. May God bless King Abdullah and the people of Jordan.

Nadiem Sawakid and family
Australia

MY DEEPEST sympathy to all of the people of Jordan! I was fortunate enough to spend 4 1/2 weeks in Jordan in the spring of 1997 and again two weeks during the spring of 1998. I feel that my time spent in Jordan has given me a great opportunity to meet many of your people and make many friends!

I just wanted you to know that we here in Sauk Centre, Minnesota prayed for the King, at our church Sunday morning! Again my deepest sympathy! You are all in our prayers!

Moe
U.S.

AS A Jew I wish to offer my deepest condolences to Queen Noor and the entire Royal Family upon the death of King Hussein.

I cannot explain why, but my family and I feel that we have experienced a personal loss. We hope and pray that His Majesty's legacy of peace will endure.

We hope that this sad occasion will be an impetus to all of us to rededicate ourselves to friendship and goodwill between Arab and Jew, which is one of the goals toward which your beloved King had striven.

He is remembered in our prayers.

Gershon Schneiersohn
Tel Aviv
Israel

THE PASSING of your great King is a great loss to the entire world and we all grieve with you. His contributions to world peace and to mankind will be part of history forever.

As a Canadian, I would also like to express to the Jordanian people how sad and ashamed I am of our elected leader Prime Minister for not attending the funeral. His actions showed a lack of class, a lack of caring and a lack of respect and I can assure that his actions do not represent the wishes of Canadians.

D. Gagnon
Ottawa

Canadian delegation

AS CANADA was omitted in the list of attending countries printed in yesterday's Jordan Times, we hope that Canada's attendance can be recognised in today's Jordan Times, either in a brief notice, or perhaps by printing an amended list of countries in attendance. Thank you.

Canadian delegation

- 1) The Honourable Mr. Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- 2) His Excellency Michael James Molloy, Ambassador and Plenipotentiary Extraordinary
- 3) Mr. Mac Harb, MP, Member of Parliament
- 4) Dr. Grant Hill, MP, MD, Member of Parliament
- 5) Dr. Yvon Charbonneau, MP, PhD, Member of Parliament
- 6) Mr. Benoit Sauvageau, MP, Member of Parliament
- 7) Mr. Benoit Sauvageau, MP, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Canada
- 8) Mr. Vaughan Johnstone, Assistant Chief of Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Canadian Embassy in Amman

Cyber condolence book

MY COMPANY runs the Website for the Embassy of Jordan in London and we have opened a cyberspace condolence book for people around the world to register their thoughts about King Hussein.

We have received thousands and thousands of viewers and we've been inundated by many moving messages. You can see them on www.jordanembassyuk.gov.jo

JOHN COOKSON
newswatch
U.K.

The Resident Representative
and Staff of
Friedrich Naumann Foundation
express their sincere condolences
and deepest sympathy to the Royal Hashemite Family
and to the people
of Jordan for the loss of
**His Majesty
King Hussein Ben Talal**
May his soul rest in peace


THE POWER
OF FLIGHT
Join the Hashemite family,
Royal Jordanian and the
Jordanian people in their deep
sorrow at the loss of
**His Majesty
King Hussein Ben Talal,**
a great Pilot and Aviator.
May his soul rest in peace.

 **sneema**
Join the Hashemite family,
Royal Jordanian, the Royal
Jordanian Air Force and the
Jordanian people in their deep
sorrow at the loss of
**His Majesty
King Hussein Ben Talal,**
a great Pilot and Aviator.
May his soul rest in peace.

 **GE Aircraft Engines**
Join the Hashemite family,
Royal Jordanian, the Royal
Jordanian Air Force and the
Jordanian people in their deep
sorrow at the loss of
**His Majesty
King Hussein Ben Talal,**
a great Pilot and Aviator.
May his soul rest in peace.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Reduction in the volume of trade protocol with Iraq described as 'devastating blow'

**** COMMENTING ON** the possibility of reducing the volume of Jordanian exports to Iraq as a result of the sharp drop in oil prices, industrial sources said such a move would augment the problems that have been accumulating and burdening the industrial sector and would cause more frustrations.

"Reducing the volume of the trade protocol with Iraq another time will be a devastating blow to the Jordanian industrial sector which hopes to optimise its exports to outside markets, especially the traditional ones including the Iraqi which is considered the largest market that imports Jordanian products," said Marwan Khirfan, a board member of the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI). He referred to the 1998 trade protocol stressing that despite totalling \$255 million, it did not satisfy the ambitions of the Jordanian industrialists. "Many industries were set up in the Kingdom for the benefit of the Iraqi market," he emphasised.

The Joint Jordanian-Iraqi Trade Committee is expected to meet soon to specify the volume of Jordanian exports to Iraq in light of the volume of oil supplies that the Kingdom has agreed to import from Iraq earlier this year. Industry and Trade Minister Mohammad Saleh Hourani expects the volume of exports to be lowered due to the sharp drop in oil prices which are seen continuing at a low level throughout this year. The level of exports is expected to be reduced by \$65 million to around

\$190 million.

Noting that according to Central Bank statistics, Jordanian exports to Iraq amounted to JD142 million in 1997, Khirfan said that by lowering the volume of the trade protocol, Jordanian industries will be losing an important part of the Iraqi market for the benefit of products from other countries. He added that Turkey, Syria and the United Arab Emirates have opened the door wide for trading with Iraq.

"We should not sacrifice the (Iraqi) market so easily," Khirfan said stressing that Iraqi officials give priority to Jordanian goods and Jordanian industrialists. "While we exert every possible effort to keep the Iraqi market, which was once a monopoly for Jordanian exporters, the Iraqis will be pressured to look to other countries if we continue to shrink the volume of the trade protocol," he emphasised.

Khirfan said: "When the time is near to reap the fruits we find others racing ahead of us to get them although we were caring for the fruits from the beginning." He attributed that to measures which are sometimes adopted without taking into considerations the interests of economic sectors including industry, trade, transport and Aqaba port.

Industrialists and traders are, meanwhile, calling for raising the trade protocol with Iraq to the level of \$400 million that existed many years ago to meet Iraqi needs and widen the base of exports to Iraq (Al Dustour).

Saudi construction activity declined in 1998 — study

RIYADH (R) — Construction activity in Saudi Arabia slipped last year on an economic slowdown caused by low oil prices and a cut in government spending, but is expected to see some pick-up in 1999, a bank report said.

"With the current economic slowdown in Saudi Arabia, investment in construction activities is expected to decline by 10 per cent to 60.1 billion riyals (\$16.02 billion) in 1998 and to moderately recover in 1999," said the report by the National Commercial Bank (NCB).

In the 10-month period to October 1998, the combined value of construction contracts awarded declined by 23.3 per cent to 11.90 billion riyals compared with 15.52 billion in the same period the previous year, the report said.

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer and exporter, cut spending in its 1999 budget by 15.2 per cent to 165 billion riyals to cope with the lowest oil prices in 12 years.

But NCB said despite the slowdown several new construction projects remained in

the pipeline.

"Besides the projects already awarded in the first 10 months of 1998, a number of industrial and oil-related projects are in the pipeline which would provide contracting opportunities in 1999 and beyond," it said.

The report forecast construction as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) to rise to 9.3 per cent in 1998 from 8.6 in 1997.

But it added that the sector could have difficulties raising more funds, even with the government meeting some of

its arrears.

"Although the government is believed to have issued so far this year (up to October 1998) 3.4 billion riyals worth of special government bonds to contractors and suppliers, the growing indebtedness of the construction sector suggests that additional commercial bank credit to construction related activities would become more difficult to acquire in 1999."

The decline in construction activity was also hitting the country's eight cement producers, the report said.

It said the combined corporate earnings of the cement firms dropped by 18.8 per cent in the first nine months of 1998, from the same period the previous year. Domestic prices of cement dropped by 42 per cent in the third quarter of 1998.

Cement consumption in Saudi Arabia grew rapidly after the 1991 Gulf War thanks to a construction boom which encouraged many cement firms to invest millions of dollars in new plants or in expanding existing facilities.

Israeli industry official urges more trade with Jordan

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli and Jordanian business leaders should not hesitate to expand trade and investment ties following the death of King Hussein, an official of Israel's Manufacturers Association said Tuesday.

Doron Tamir, a vice president of the association, said in a statement that the two countries should aim to increase the number of joint ventures over the next three years to 50.

He urged the two countries to strive to increase two-way trade by a factor of 10 to \$400 million.

"For this purpose the governments of Israel

and Jordan must do more to lower barriers and to facilitate passage and traffic between the two countries so trade can develop accordingly," he said.

Israeli-Jordanian trade last year grew by 25 per cent to \$40 million. The association estimated the total value of Israeli-Jordanian joint ventures at \$300 million.

Tamir said the association would be sending a delegation to Jordan to show support for continued relations. He said the Israeli business sector gave top priority to political and economic stability in neighbouring Jordan.



The American Jewish Committee

فلتكن ذكراه مباركة للأبد

May his memory forever be a blessing

In humility before the God who created us all, we mourn with the Royal Family and the people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

the passing of His Majesty King Hussein

a ruler of extraordinary wisdom and courage,

who lifted the eyes of the Middle East and led his people

to a new vision of peace and reconciliation.

We will honour his beloved memory by our work together

in the cause he so bravely championed

Bruce M. Ramer
President

David A. Harris
Executive Director

Joseph Alpher
Director, Israel/ME Office

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You could use an advanced philosophical concept to solve a puzzle today. It might happen by accident, and that's part of the trick. As if you let go on purpose so that a miracle can occur, and it does! You could acquire a lot of wisdom and some peace of mind, if you follow this general theme.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Looks like a friend of yours is clashing with an older person. Its one of those lose/lose situations. Your friend is feeling beat up, and the other person is feeling let down. You can see this situation more objectively than either of them, so coaching is permissible. Your good common sense will be appreciated.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Looks like somebody could get hurt feelings today, and its one of those tragic situations that might have been avoided if people were a little more careful about what they said. Choose your words carefully. Don't make fun of anyone else, for example. Even something said in jest could hurt badly, especially if its the truth.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) A sensitive friend of yours could get her feelings hurt today. You're probably one of the people she'll come to if that happens. Advise your friend that she's luckier than she realises. A confronting situation could point out an area that needs to be avoided, or a lesson to be learned.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) The spotlight is on love and partnerships, two of your favourite topics. They may not be going all that smoothly, however. What you want and what your partner insists upon may be quite different. Who's going to give in first? Well, in this particular situation, it looks like that honour falls to you.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) The conflict today concerns your partner and something that's going on at home. The two of you could have a clash of ideas, which will require that some sort of compromise be reached. Part of the compromise, just possibly, is something that neither of you has considered before.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) A thoughtless remark today could hurt a coworker more than you ever thought possible, so be careful what you say. Tell people

what they want to hear. This isn't lying, and lying is not required. What's required is a change in attitude. Come from their position instead of your own and you'll do fine.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Looks like you could have a setback, but you'll survive it if you plan ahead. Keep something in reserve, and don't gamble more than you can afford to lose. The good luck comes closer to home. Something you already own could increase in value, or maybe you'll just find out its worth more than you thought.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You're a gregarious, outgoing person. When you run into someone who doesn't want to mingle, you might secretly feel there's something wrong with him or her. If you let that get out today, you could hurt a friend's feelings. Accept people as they are, and don't expect them to be any other way. You may be pleasantly surprised.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Yesterday's blinding insights are starting to settle in by now. You might have to look at yourself in a completely new and different way. This takes a little practice, but it's worth it. You might even decide that its OK for you to take a little time to play, instead of working 24 hours a day. Stranger things have happened.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 18) If your sweetheart thinks you're spending more on your friends than on your family, you'll be in trouble. Don't worry. You'll find a way around this rather delicate situation. What you need to give your loved one is not a gift, but a compliment. Reassure him or her that your attention never strays. That's what this problem is really about.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) Someone might say something that hurts your feelings today. The person probably wasn't being malicious, but if he or she was laughing, it sure felt like that, didn't it? Well, when we can laugh at ourselves, that's when we really become enlightened. Why don't you give that a try? It'll make everybody feel better.

Birldstone of February:
Amethyst — Onyx

British women take lead in changing society

LONDON (R) — Women are at the cutting edge of a fast-changing society in Britain, snapping up new jobs faster than men, and girls do better at school, according to an exhaustive survey.

If the British male is feeling vulnerable, as lifestyle magazines suggest, the 1999 Social Trends survey from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) will do little to put his mind at rest.

It showed women took most of the new jobs on offer, being more willing to work part-time and often for less money. More than 75 per cent of women aged between 25 and 44 were either in work or seeking it in 1997, compared with 50 per cent in 1971.

The average household's disposable income nearly doubled between 1971 and 1997. But the willingness to pile purchases on credit, one of the factors that turned the 1980s boom to bust, has been replaced by a much more cautious approach.

Debit cards, which take money direct from bank accounts, accounted for 42 per cent of total card spending in 1997, up from only seven per cent in 1989.

Despite their advances, women can expect to earn only 80 per cent of the average man's hourly pay and increasing numbers across the sexual divide are working harder than the European Union (EU) would like.

YOU BELONG TO GOD AND YOU RETURN TO HIM

With the deepest pain, sadness and grief, Dorsch Consult München and Amman Office mourns the loss of the Great King

His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal

and extend their deepest condolences and sympathy to

His Majesty King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein,

the Royal Hashemite Family and the Jordanian people.

May he rest in eternal peace

Employees of the German Development Cooperation

Represented by

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)

and

The Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)

Would like to extend to

His Majesty King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein,

The Hashemite Family and the Jordanian people

Their deepest condolences on the passing away of

His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal,

The great and the respected Man of Peace and Leadership

May God grant the Royal family and the large Jordanian family the strength and courage to face the days ahead.

May God Rest His Soul In Peace

JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE

DAJANI JEWELLERS



Many villas and apartments for rent and sale

Furnished & Unfurnished
For more information call:
Abdoun Real Estate
5920605/5920609/079530007
Web Site is
www.abdoun.com.jo

STUDIO HAIG

Professional quality in 1 hour service
Develop your colour film at our shop and get:
* JUMBO photo size 30% larger.
* Free enlargement 20 x 30 cm.

Shmelsani - Opposite Grindlays Bank.
Phone: 5604042
Sweifeh Tel: 822881

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS SECTION CALL

5684311 - 5699634 EXT. 42

&

Fax: 5693337

FOR RENT

Deluxe Villas and Apartments



SWEIFIYEH
A. Hajarat Complex
Tel. 5864230 - 5865167
Mobile: 079/537588



Meetings and Conferences

Focus on Your Business, our specialist will handle the details to ensure your Success...

your Friendly Host

At 6th Circle
Tel: 5510001



BAYERISCHER HOF

German Restaurant

LUNCH: 12:30p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

DINNER: 6:30p.m. - 11:30 p.m.

German coffee and cakes served all day

Sweifeh - Al Hamra Street Tel: 5819730 / 5810811
PO Box 6555, Amman-11118 Jordan

French captain Deschamps vows to end English jinx

LONDON (R) — French captain Didier Deschamps will equal Manuel Amoros' record of 82 French caps on Wednesday, and he has vowed to do it in style by finishing on the winning side against England for the first time.

"Winning here tomorrow would mean something special to me because the last time I came to this stadium, in February 1992, the English beat us 2-0," Deschamps said. "That's not the best Wembley souvenir."

"(Michel) Platini was our coach and we were on a run of more than 20 matches without defeat and that loss marked the beginning of a dark era for French soccer."

That "dark era" culminated in France failing to qualify for the 1994 World Cup. "After we lost at Wembley everything went wrong," Deschamps continued.

"Maybe we faced too much pressure in previous games and came here too relaxed. We felt we were losing ground during the game itself and there was nothing we could do," Deschamps's second match against England was during the 1992 European championship in Sweden and the game ended a goalless draw — the French were eliminated in the first round of

the tournament.

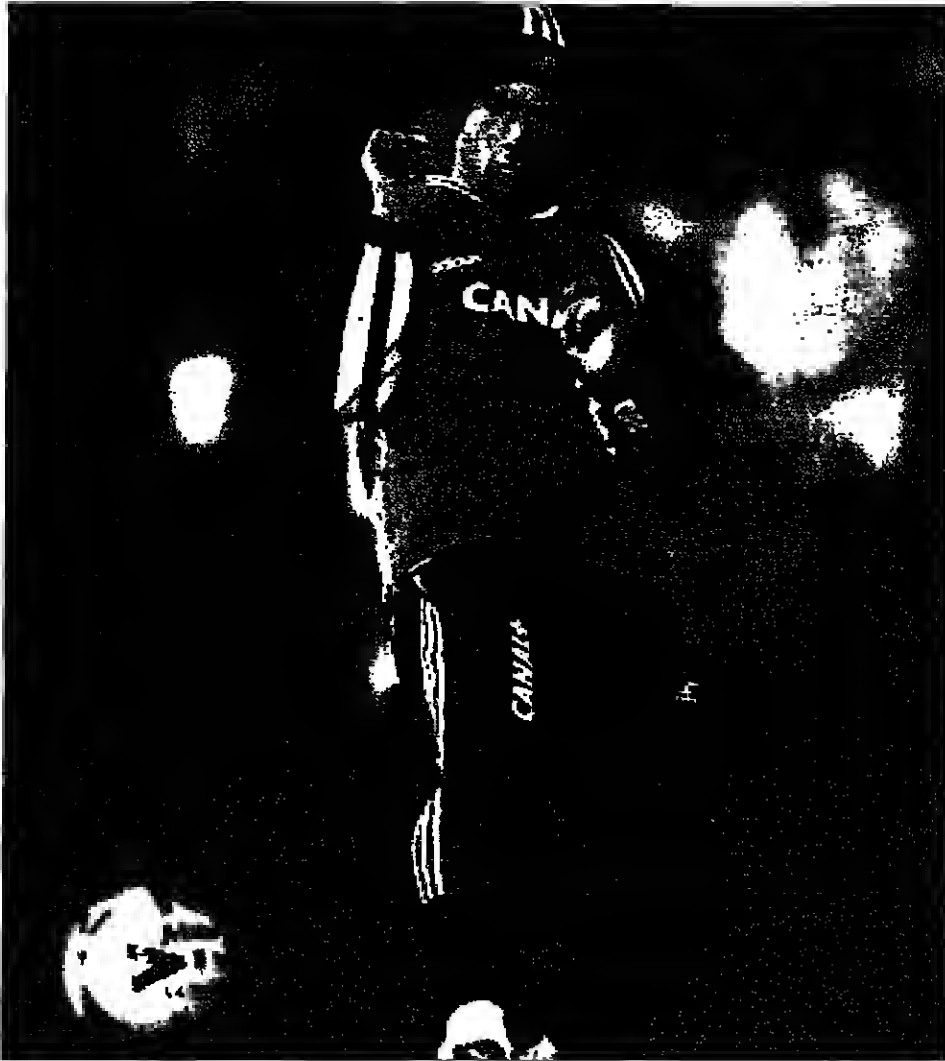
The last time he faced the English was during the 1997 Tournoi de France in Montpellier and striker Alan Shearer blasted home the visitors' winner from close-range five minutes from time.

"With such a poor record, it's obvious I badly want victory at Wembley. It would be historical for France who have never won here and for me too," he said.

"I always play to win but there are some victories which mean more than others... and taming Morocco at Marseille is not the same as beating England at Wembley," he said.

"We must be ready for a very strong physical challenge. We will have to play very fast because the English are not going to leave us time to take a breath before the final whistle," he said. "But we are the world champions... and for the next four years we will be the team to beat."

"I know France have never won at Wembley stadium, but we had never won in Russia before the last time we went to Moscow." In October France beat Russia 3-2 in a Euro 2000 qualifier.



French midfielder Zinedine Zidane plays with the ball on Monday at Harrow Borough stadium in London during a training session two days before the friendly soccer match England vs France at Wembley stadium (AFP photo)

Arsenal veteran Dixon recalled to England team

LONDON (R) — Arsenal defender Lee Dixon, who last played for England more than five years ago, was recalled on Tuesday to the team for Wednesday's prestige friendly international against world champions France at Wembley Stadium.

Dixon, who will be 35 next month and who won the last of his 21 caps against San Marino in November 1993, was called into the injury-hit squad by caretaker coach Howard Wilkinson on Monday.

He is one of four Arsenal players in the defence along with goalkeeper David Seaman, and centre-backs Tony Adams and Martin Keown.

Captain Alan Shearer, who missed England's last international against the Czech Republic in November, also returns to the side for his 47th cap.

He will be looking to add to his 22 international goals and score against the French as he did the last time the teams met in June 1997 when England won 1-0 in Montpellier.

England: David Seaman; Lee Dixon, Tony Adams, Martin Keown, Graeme Le Saux; David Beckham, Paul Ince, Jamie Redknapp, Darren Anderton; Alan Shearer, Michael Oweo.



New England coach Howard Wilkinson at Bisham Abbey, near London, Monday, during training ahead of Wednesday's game with France at Wembley. It will be Wilkinson's first game since he succeeded the controversial Glenn Hoddle (AP photo)

Ancelotti is Juventus coach after Lippi goes



Recent file photo of Parma soccer coach Carlo Ancelotti, who was appointed coach of Italian champions Juventus on Monday following the resignation of Marcello Lippi (AFP photo)

ROME (R) — Juventus appointed Carlo Ancelotti as coach with immediate effect on Monday following Marcello Lippi's dramatic resignation on Sunday night.

The Italian champions announced their decision after an emergency board meeting in Turin. They described the situation created by Lippi's departure as "delicate".

"Juventus have invited Carlo Ancelotti, whose contract had already been

formalised for the next two seasons, to take over as team coach immediately..." they said in a statement.

Ancelotti, who had been due to take over from Lippi at the end of this season, confirmed he would accept the appointment.

He was out of contract and, when Lippi stepped down after Juventus' abject 4-2 home defeat by Parma on Sunday, was the obvious man to take over.

The former Roma and AC

Milan midfielder inherits a Juventus side embroiled in their worst season for 37 years.

They are ninth in the championship, 15 points off the pace.

They are out of the Italian Cup and Ancelotti has less than a month to sort them out before they tackle Greek side Olympiakos Piraeus in the quarter-finals of the European Cup.

Juventus have scored only 22 goals in their 20 league matches and, with Alessandro Del Piero still injured, have conspicuously failed to find a solution to their goal drought.

France's Thierry Henry and Argentine Juan Esnaider arrived last month to bolster their attack but neither has had time to settle in and start scoring goals.

The last time Juventus sat so low in the league table at this stage of the season was in 1962, when they were ninth at the halfway stage in the title race.

That year they slumped to 12th by the end of the season — their worst league finish.

Ancelotti, 39, made his name as a player at AS Roma in the 1980s and was an integral part of the team who won their last Italian championship in 1983 and reached the European Cup final the following year.

He then moved to AC Milan where he linked up with the man who would become his coaching mentor — Arrigo Sacchi.

When Sacchi left Milan to coach the Italy side, Ancelotti followed him and was his right hand man in the early 1990s.

From there, he moved into coaching in his own right, guiding Reggiana from Serie B to Serie A in the 1995-96 season before moving into the big time with Parma.

He took the small town side into the European Champions' League two years ago but was dismissed at the end of last season after the club failed to win a trophy.

Like Sacchi, he believes in strict 4-4-2 formations and tends to build teams based on work rate and co-operation rather than flair and gifted playmakers.

His appointment has been criticised by many Juventus fans but he has appealed for a period of grace.

"Let the fans judge me on my results," he said last month when he was formally appointed as Lippi's successor.

Lippi angrily quit within minutes of Sunday night's defeat.

"If the problem with this team is me, then here's my resignation. Let's see this team without the Lippi problem," he said. "I've tried to do everything possible to make this team up but I've failed." His exit brings a remarkably successful era to an end.

He guided Juventus to three league titles in his four and a half seasons at



Photo dated November 29, 1998 shows Juventus coach Marcello Lippi leaving the field in Bologna after his side was defeated. Lippi quit as coach of Italian champions Juventus late February 07, minutes after his team suffered a humiliating 4-2 home defeat to Parma. Lippi, who had announced before Christmas that he would be leaving at the end of the season, said that resigning would solve the 'Lippi problem' at the club. No confirmation was available from club officials (AFP photo)

the club as well as three consecutive European Cup finals, a UEFA Cup final and an Italian Cup title.

Lippi has reportedly

reached a deal to coach Inter Milan next season but neither the club nor the coach have confirmed the reports.

Agassi rolls into 2nd round in San Jose

SAN JOSE, California (R)

Second seed Andre Agassi fine-tuned his game against doubles specialist Todd Woodbridge on Monday, rolling to a swift 6-2 6-1 victory over the Australian in the opening round of the Sybase Open.

"It was a good first match for me because Todd's weapons aren't going to blow you off the court," said Agassi, who improved to 6-0 against Woodbridge.

"He's going to work you left and right, to look to get in and hit a lot of creative shots. That allows me the freedom to work into my game," Agassi said.

Fourth seed Michael Chang also advanced easily with a 6-2 6-2 drubbing of Brazilian Fernando Meligeni.

Two seeds were ousted with number five Mariano Puerta of Argentina falling 6-2 4-6 6-3 to Norway's Christian Ruud, while seventh seed Mariano Zabaleta of Argentina was crushed by Canada's Sebastien Lareau 6-2 6-1.

Agassi, who was stunned in the fourth round of the Australian Open two weeks ago by unheralded compatriot Vince Spadea, said he was still depressed by the loss but plans to continue his quest to return to the Grand Slam winner's circle.

"You have to build up

the momentum again," reflected Agassi, a four-time champion here.

"When I'm playing a big tournament and there's so much riding on every match, then you blow the steam with a loss you have to start again," Agassi, 28, who hasn't reached a Grand Slam quarter-final since 1996, was at a loss to explain his recent struggles in the majors.

"I know I've got more room to improve. I find myself quite frequently being frustrated that I'm not playing better and that's kind of good in a strange, sick way," Agassi said.

Even after thumping Woodbridge, he didn't feel quite right.

"I'm a step away from playing big time players in big time situations. I need to be a predator out there," said Agassi, who has been working on his physical conditioning.

Pete Sampras, who has been number one in the world for a total of 258 weeks, resumes his chase of Ivan Lendl's record of 270 weeks at the top this week.

Sampras, who passed up the Australian Open citing exhaustion, makes his 1999 debut here Tuesday night, when he faces Spaniard Galo Blanco.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Romanian striker retires at 30

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Romanian striker Ilie Dumitrescu, whose two goals against Argentina at the 1994 World Cup turned him into a national hero, is retiring for personal reasons, his club Steaua Bucharest said Tuesday. Despite a glittering career, the 30-year-old Dumitrescu has been bothered by repeated injuries and a lackluster form in recent months. He played abroad for four years with England's Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United, Sevilla of the Spanish Primera Division and Mexico's Adante before returning to Steaua Bucharest, which he played before his international career, in September. Known in Romania for his love of fast cars and Italian clothes, Dumitrescu became a national figure after he unexpectedly scored two crucial goals against Argentina to lead Romania to a 3-2 victory and into the quarterfinals in the 1994 World Cup — its best finish. But by last year's World Cup in France, Dumitrescu's form was shaky. He played only one half of one game — against Tunisia. Romania drew 1-1 with Tunisia and was knocked out by Croatia in the second round. During his 10-year career, Dumitrescu played 58 times for Romania, scoring 19 goals.

Smoking banned in Saudi stadiums

RIYADH (AFP) — Football fans and officials alike are to be banned from smoking in Saudi stadiums, following a decision by the Saudi football federation Tuesday. "The public as well as trainers and technicians are forbidden to smoke in any of the stadiums in the Saudi kingdom during official matches and friendlies, in view of the harmful effects of nicotine," the fed-

eration said in a statement carried by the SPA news agency. Saudi Arabia, in common with a number of other Gulf states, has adopted a series of anti-smoking measures in the last few years, including an increase in cigarette prices and a ban on cigarette advertising.

Hingis reclaims top spot from Davenport

STAMFORD, Connecticut (AP) — After 17 weeks of being out of the top spot, Martina Hingis again is ranked the world's top-ranked women's tennis player. The 18-year-old Hingis reclaimed No. 1 by winning the Pan Pacific Open at Tokyo on Sunday. Actually, her semifinal victory over No. 3 Jana Novotna Saturday assured Hingis of moving up from No. 2 after top-ranked Lindsay Davenport was beaten by Amanda Coetzer in the quarterfinals. In rankings released by the WTA Monday, Hingis had 5,722 points. Davenport was No. 2 with 5,547, followed by Novotna, Monica Seles, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Venus Williams, Steffi Graf, Mary Pierce, Patty Schnyder and Nathalie Tauziat. Hingis was No. 1 from March 31, 1997, to Oct. 11, 1998, becoming the youngest ever top-ranked player since the computer rankings began in 1975. When Hingis first became No. 1, she was 16 years, 6 months, 1 day. So far this year, Hingis has won 14 of 15 matches, including the season's first Grand Slam tournament, the Australian Open, and her last 12 matches. Last year, she lost her No. 1 ranking when she went six months without winning a title. During that same span, Davenport won six titles, including her first Grand Slam singles championship at the U.S. Open. "I was 16 when I first got the No. 1 ranking," Hingis said. "I just hope I can now hold on to it longer, maybe as long as I play tennis."

Rusedski, Moya through to 2nd round at Dubai Open

DUBAI, UAE (AP) —

Britain's Greg Rusedski moved into the second round of the \$1 million Dubai Open Monday by defeating Sjeng Schalken of the Netherlands, 6-4, 6-4.

Meanwhile, second-seed Carlos Moya of Spain survived a first-set scare to beat Sweden's Magnus Norman 1-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Rusedski was happy to return to his winning form and appeared set to face some of the world's top players who are taking part

in the tournament.

"I was really pleased with the way I played. I feel more relaxed and much more positive. I want to compete against the best and here you have six of the top ten players in the world," the fourth seed said.

With the flags flying at half-staff at the Dubai Tennis Stadium to mark the death of King Hussein, Rusedski did not face any real threat from the Dutchman and was able to break him in the seventh

game of the first set and fifth game of the second set to wrap up the match.

Moya looked like he was on his way to an early exit but managed to recover after a dismal first set against Norman to win the next two and advance.

Sixth-seed Albert Costa overcame Morocco's Hicham Azzi 6-3, 6-2 while former French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten advanced to the second round by defeating Juan Antonio Marin of Costa Rica 6-4, 6-4.

JORDAN TIMES E-MAIL:
jotimes@go.com.jo

Nagano
that
K
Winter
Olympic
been
bad
the
Olympic
The
po
the
to

in a
found
family
officials
them
do
the
pre
with
and
equipment
for
items
not per
officials.

Claro
an
sc
re
to
the
ev
Se
Yo
in
fr
dis
up
in
inf
the
part
of
the
three
trips to

Yomuri
reported
least three
part of
the
three trips to

Options Tyson's

TYSON (AP) — If a
Tyson a year in
verdict inside
the
they consider
of the former
sentence for
a tender tender
in August.
no contest —
the charges
December. His
Friday by District
could mean the
32-year-old boxer
the time of the great

must decide with
whether Tyson
perpetrated by
where a judge
accept the no-con
by jury.
guilty, Tyson would
conviction on his
again be subject to Mar
guidelines that call for a
years.

In addition, a conviction wo
standing in Indiana an
Indiana authorities must decid
Tyson violated his probation f
conviction, and Nevada box

FILE — The Olympic flame
Winter Olympics in Sarajevo
ravaged by war and bearing
Olympics, Sarajevo wants
Olympic Committee announ
of the 1984 Olympics (AP ph

Former IOC official's son denies report of dubious trip to Nagano

TOKYO (AP) — Nagano officials said Tuesday that they have found no wrongdoing in the Japanese city's bid for the 1998 Winter Games.

The Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC) has been investigating Nagano's bid at the request of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The Nagano city and prefectural (state) investigation was carried out in response to the JOC inquiry.

Nagano city hall said in a statement that it had found four cases in which family members of IOC officials visited Nagano by themselves, at the expense of the bidders. It did not elaborate.

Nagano bidders also presented IOC officials with soccerballs, judo outfits and other athletic equipment, but they were donations for nations where such items were lacking, and not personal gifts to IOC officials, the statement said.

Nagano Gov. Goro Yoshimura was quoted by Kyodo News service as saying that their investigation showed that the bidders' treatment of IOC members was "within the scope of common sense." Ever since the Olympic scandal began to unfold with allegations of bribery in Salt Lake City, scrutiny has intensified into Nagano's bid.

The national Yomiuri newspaper reported Tuesday that at least three IOC officials will be part of the JOC's report as suspected of accepting free trips to

Nagano for their family members in violation of IOC rules.

But the son of former IOC vice president and former head of the U.S. Olympic Committee Robert Helmick — said he went to Nagano once, sometime between 1989 and 1994, but it was for his own business purposes and was unrelated to the Olympics.

"I think it's funny how rumors get started," the younger Robert Helmick said in a telephone interview from Denver, Colorado. "It had nothing to do with the Olympics."

Helmick's father denied he had anything to do with his son's trip to the city.

"I have no knowledge of that," he said in a telephone interview from Des Moines, Iowa. "We have nothing to do with each other's business."

Agustin Arroyo, an IOC member from Ecuador, who has been suspended and recommended for expulsion in the Salt Lake scandal for allegedly receiving financial support for living and travel expenses, visited Japan in September 1990, the Yomiuri said.

While he was at meetings in Tokyo, his wife and her friend were wine and dined by bidders in Nagano, including visits to a hot spring, a restaurant specialising in beef dishes and an apple orchard, the report said.

The Yomiuri also reported that the JOC suspects

Algerian IOC official Mohamed Zerguini of receiving free trips to Nagano for himself, his son and his son's wife.

Arroyo and Zerguini could not be immediately reached for comment.

Nagano bid officials have acknowledged they went all out to woo IOC officials, including entertainment by geisha at fancy restaurants.

The bidders have also said they gave a painting and sword, both worth thousands of dollars, to IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch. The IOC says it has the painting at its headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, but denies having ever received the sword.

Nagano artist Eisetsu Shiratori said he gave one original painting of a kimono-clad woman to Samaranch but made colour Xeroxes of the original for 20 IOC officials who visited Nagano.

He said in a telephone interview Monday that the original was worth more than a million yen (\$9,000), but the copies were worth at most 20,000 yen — within the limit of IOC rules under the exchange rate at that time.

There is no limit on the value of gifts for Samaranch, under IOC rules, because he accepts them on behalf of the IOC and does not vote in the selection of host-cities. IOC officials are limited to gifts under \$150.

Options discussed by Tyson's lawyers

WASHINGTON (AP) — If a no-contest plea got Mike Tyson a year in jail, what would a guilty verdict bring? That's the crux of the discussion inside the offices of Tyson's lawyers as they consider whether to risk an appeal of the former heavyweight champion's sentence for assaulting two motorists after a fender bender in suburban Gaithersburg, Md., in August.

Tyson pleaded no-contest — meaning he neither contested the charges nor admitted guilt — in December. His one-year sentence, levied Friday by District Court Judge Stephen Johnson, could mean the end of the career of the 32-year-old boxer, once on course to become one of the greatest heavyweights.

The lawyers must decide within 30 days of the sentencing whether Tyson's career would be further jeopardized by an appeal to Circuit Court, where a judge could then decide not to accept the no-contest plea and order a trial by jury.

If found guilty, Tyson would not only have another conviction on his record, but would again be subject to Maryland sentencing guidelines that call for a jail term of three to seven years.

In addition, a conviction would worsen Tyson's standing in Indiana and Nevada. Indiana authorities must decide whether Tyson violated his probation for a 1992 rape conviction, and Nevada boxing author-

ities could revoke Tyson's boxing licence for the second time in two years.

In Indiana, Judge Patricia Gifford, who presided over Tyson's rape trial, is awaiting paperwork from Maryland before ruling on whether he violated probation.

The risk of an appeal was discussed at length by Tyson's lawyers on Monday, a source inside the office of lawyer Paul Kemp told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

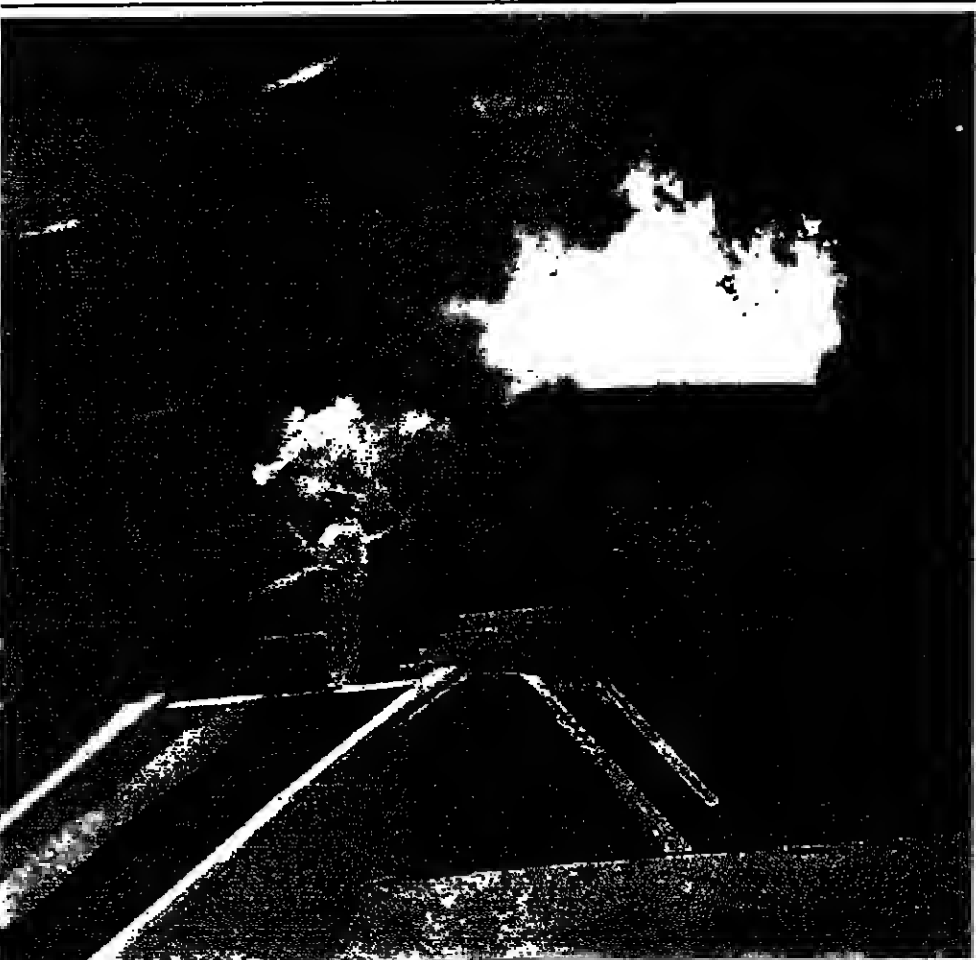
Neither Kemp nor Tyson's other attorney, Robert Greenberg, returned calls.

Prosecutor Douglas Gansler, who led the call for jail time for Tyson, said the boxer could be fighting again in 1999 under his current sentence if he behaves.

"There's a strong argument to be made that he's better off not appealing," Gansler said. "If he were treated like any ordinary prisoner, like he has been, he would be in the (Montgomery County) jail about two to three months." After that, Tyson could be transferred to a pre-release center, a sort of halfway house where he could leave during the day to go to work and return at night.

"He would be in the system about nine months," Gansler said.

Gansler said Tyson is being held in a private cell "for his own protection." If an appeal is filed, Tyson could ask for a bond hearing and be released pending a trial.



FILE — The Olympic flame is lit during the opening ceremonies for the XIV Winter Olympics in Sarajevo's Kosevo stadium, in this Feb. 8, 1984 photo. Ravaged by war and bearing little resemblance to the city that staged the 1984 Olympics, Sarajevo wants to hold the Winter Games in 2010. The Bosnian Olympic Committee announced its intentions on Monday, the 15th anniversary of the 1984 Olympics (AP photo)

O'Neal leads Lakers against Spurs

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Shaquille O'Neal scored 26 points and helped hold David Robinson to 11 as the Los Angeles Lakers beat San Antonio 80-75 on Monday night, banding the Spurs their first loss of the season.

O'Neal also led the Lakers on boards, grabbing 13 rebounds as Los Angeles outrebounded San Antonio 51-38. Eddie Jones added 21 points while Kobe Bryant had 19.

San Antonio, which won its first two games, was led by Tim Duncan with 21 points and 15 rebounds. Robinson shot just 4-for-11 from the field with seven rebounds.

Pistons 106, Wizards 103

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Grant Hill scored a career-high 46 points, including the go-ahead free throw with 13 seconds remaining, as Detroit remained undefeated.

Hill, whose previous high was 38 points in a 124-120 win over Indiana on April 20, 1997, tied the mark for high game in The Palace, shared by Shaquille O'Neal.

Hill shot 14-for-21 from the field and 18-for-22 from the line. He also had seven assists, seven rebounds, two blocked shots and two steals.

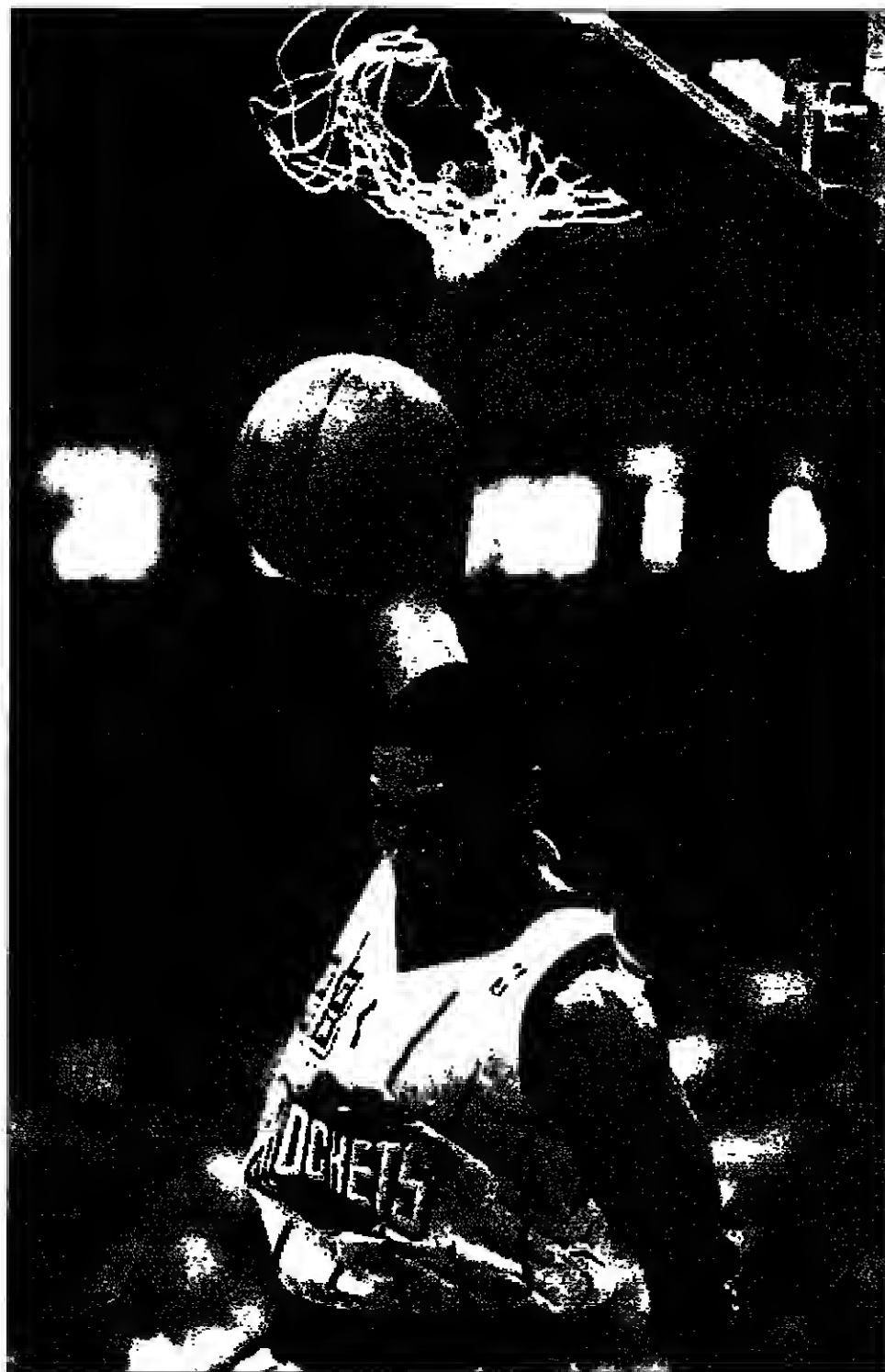
Mitch Richmond scored 26 points for Washington.

Rockets 89, Nuggets 80

In Houston, with a sell-out crowd cheering his every move, Scottie Pippen had 24 points and 13 rebounds in his home debut for the Rockets.

Houston's threesome of Charles Barkley, Hakeem Olajuwon and Pippen shot a collective 74 per cent from the field in a take-charge first half that ended with Houston ahead by 22.

Charles Barkley continued his fast start with 15 points and 19 rebounds, and his 12 second-quarter



Houston Rockets forward Scottie Pippen slam dunks past the Denver Nuggets on a second quarter fast break on Monday. The Rockets were hosting the Nuggets at the Compaq Center in Houston. Houston beat Denver 99-80 (Reuters photo)

points led a 21-4 charge that put the Rockets in control.

Olajuwon had 14 points and 13 rebounds, giving the Rockets three double-double performances.

Hornets 94, Heat 91

In Charlotte, North Carolina, J.R. Reid made several key plays in the final 72 seconds and the Charlotte Hornets avoided their first 0-3 start in four years.

Reid scored four of

Charlotte's last six points and finished with 19. David Wesley added 18 points and 12 assists and Chuck Person and Bobby Phillips had 16 points apiece.

Miami, playing the second of three games in three

days, was without leading scorer Jamal Mashburn, who sat out to rest a deep thigh bruise. That left the bulk of the scoring duties to Alonzo Mourning and Tim Hardaway, both of whom struggled in the second half.

Magic 107, Celtics 90

In Orlando, Florida, Penny Hardaway scored 28 points and Nick Anderson had 26 to lead Orlando over Boston.

Despite playing for the third time in four nights, the Magic appeared to be fresher of the two teams with Hardaway, Anderson and Darrell Armstrong making up for a lack of frontcourt scoring.

Armstrong came off the bench to contribute 17 points and eight assists, while Anderson scored all but five of his points on 8-for-10 shooting in the opening half.

Hardaway made 8 of 19 shots from the field and 12 of 14 free throws in perhaps his strongest performance since early last season before knee and calf injuries forced him out of the lineup for 63 games. The four-time All-Star also had eight rebounds and six assists.

Pacers 95, Cavaliers 89

In Cleveland, Reggie Miller scored 28 points. Chris Mullin added 22 and Indiana spoiled Cleveland's home opener.

Miller took control of the game in the second half, scoring 10 points in the third and 10 in the fourth to help the Pacers bounce back from a loss at Detroit on Sunday.

The third game of the shortened season provided a rematch for the teams, who met in the first round of last year's NBA playoffs. This one, however, was light years away from being postseason-caliber basketball.

Barnes set for Charlton debut against Liverpool

Racism still taints British sport on and off the pitch

By Genny Wilkinson
Reuters

LONDON — Racism still taints British sport on and off the pitch despite official optimism that the problem is declining.

British Sports Minister Tony Banks told Reuters racism on the pitch, in the stands and in the boardroom had dramatically diminished in the past year.

But he conceded that some British sports bodies were still stuck in the 19th century and said public funding would be withdrawn from any organisation letting up in the fight.

"We have a right to expect governing bodies to produce policy consistent with modern sport in the 21st century, not amateur sport rooted in the 19th century," Banks said in an interview.

Soccer has progressed a long way since banana skins were tossed at black players and commentators said they were unlikely to have the temperament for soccer.

These days black players are well established in the game, but few bold management, coaching or senior administration positions.

Rudd Gullit, Newcastle's boss, is the only black manager in the premier league and Uriah Rennie is the only black referee on the premier league list. And not one member of an ethnic minority sits on the F.A. Council, the ultimate policy-making forum for English soccer.

Nor is there a single Asian soccer player in the premier league despite the fact that the Asian community makes up 3.5 per cent of the population and has one of the highest levels of participation at grass root levels, according to Piri Powar,

national coordinator for "Kick It Out," the anti-racism in soccer campaign.

A similar disparity exists in the stands where blacks and Asians make up just one per cent of the crowd at premier league games, but more than seven per cent of the population as a whole.

"Asian parents have seen the hostility in the stadiums and are reluctant to encourage their children to go to the game," Powar said.

The F.A. started a crackdown on racism last year when it decided to hand out red cards to any player guilty of racist taunts.

So far no player has been sent off for this reason but, Powar said, this did not mean bigoted name-calling no longer existed on the pitch.

"The referees are not aware that racist abuse comes in the form of words like 'black bastard' or 'paki'," Powar said.

"Many refs don't feel comfortable using the red card for such an offence," Racism chanting in the stands is now a criminal offence.

Racist chanting in the stands is now a criminal offence and rowdy fans were arrested this year in Norwich City and Millwall. Cricket too has its problems, according to a Roehampton Institute report published late last year.

It found that English cricket, while not explicitly racist, discriminated against black and Asian players.

The research was conducted to investigate the reasons why most black and Asian cricket clubs were not affiliated with the Essex Cricket Association (ECA).

The split between affiliated and non-affiliated clubs reflects the existence of two distinct cricket cultures, the report found.

In Sunday cricket, black and Asian players rarely

play matches against predominantly white teams. "There exists a marked reluctance by white clubs to play black and Asian clubs," said Ian McDonald, author of the Roehampton report.

One Asian respondent to the poll said his accent and the distinctly Asian name of his club made booking fixtures difficult.

"As soon as the fixture secretary (of a white club) knows it's an Asian side they will find an excuse saying, 'We are too strong,' or 'We haven't got a date free' — even though I find out later on that they have dates," the respondent said.

McDonald just 10 per cent of county cricketers were black or Asian.

"No black or Asian players that have come through the parks go on to first class play," McDonald said.

"We've got a form of apartheid at recreational levels in cricket." While the English Cricket Board last November issued a statement recognising the problem, McDonald said the governing body could not stamp out racism unless they sponsored an anti-racism summit.

"At least it's now on paper after years of denial and ignoring the problem," McDonald said.

"But they don't understand the problem yet. They haven't done any research, they haven't even talked to us." The Rugby Football League (RFL) has taken more active steps to combat racism. Last summer, the RFL launched a major anti-racism campaign with a 10,000 pound (\$16,000) grant from the English Sports Council.

"(Racism) is a small but significant problem within rugby," said Jonathan Long, a reader in Leisure Studies at

Leeds Metropolitan University and author of a 1995 study on racism in rugby.

Long said rugby league suffered similar problems to football when it came to racial prejudice.

"There is a fair sprinkling of people from African-Caribbean backgrounds but a marked absence of people from Asian backgrounds," he said.

Long said racial slurs were thrown around in the stands and on the pitch alike.

The most notorious of last season's on pitch racial scuffles occurred when Bramley fullback Anthony Gibbons became the first rugby player to be sent off for racial abuse. As punishment, the RFL banned Gibbons from playing in four matches.

The RFL actively promotes a 13-point action plan, which seeks to eradicate racism from the game at all levels.

Under the plan, professional clubs must condemn racist chants over the stadium's public address system. Clubs had to ensure no racist literature was handed out on match days and had to eradicate any racist graffiti on the grounds.

Players and coaches must follow a code of conduct that prohibits them from making racially abusive remarks. And clubs' development programmes must encourage minorities from within the community into the game.

"The RFL is to be commended for taking the initiatives but the extent to which they've been implemented is questionable," Long said. "The Commission for Racial Equality thinks some of the players are a bit cynical about it."

Iran intelligence minister resigns following dissidents' murders

TEHRAN (AFP) — Moderate Iranian President Mohammad Khatami accepted the resignation of his conservative intelligence minister Tuesday, weeks after a shock admission by the ministry that rogue agents were involved in a string of murders of dissidents.

Qorbanali Dori-Najafabadi's resignation follows mounting pressure from radical supporters of the reformist president for a thorough shake-up of the secretive intelligence services over the wave of murders which shocked public opinion.

The minister had resisted repeated calls to step down, with conservative supporters saying the ministry's record was discredited and denouncing their opponents for making political capital out of the killings.

But in the face of mounting tension over the issue, the president put pressure on Dori-Najafabadi to resign, sources close to the government told AFP.

"Now that after serving at the intelligence ministry for one and a half years... you have decided to resign and stop your cooperation with the government at that ministry... I accept your resignation," said a statement from the president carried by the official news agency IRNA.

Khatami thanked Dori-Najafabadi "for your great efforts and services" and expressed appreciation for "the valuable endeavours of our colleagues at the intelligence ministry who are the defenders of the revolutionary values as well as national security and the rights of the citizens."

In his resignation letter, the intelligence minister insisted that he had nothing to do with the murders personally and had fought to ensure that agents respected the law and the constitution.

"Recent unfortunate events were against the wishes of the vast majority of the ministry's staff... I was very strongly against them as I am now and was upset," said a text of his letter read on state radio.

The minister said he had finally been persuaded to resign because mounting criticism of his management of the ministry was impeding its effective operation.

He said he hoped his departure would pave the way for "vengeful enemies of any further oppor-

tunities" to attack the country's security apparatus and "pave the way for suitable conditions for the ministry's effective operation."

Khatami hinted he might find Dori-Najafabadi another job in government. "Of course the government and the nation will certainly benefit from your knowledge and experience and capabilities elsewhere and in an appropriate manner," he said.

Dori-Najafabadi will remain a member of the key political arbitration body, the State Expediency Council, and will be appointed an adviser to the president, the Tehran Times said.

Khatami asked the minister to stay on in a caretaker capacity until "I nominate and introduce a candidate for the intelligence ministry to the parliament."

The government newspaper Iran Daily reported that Ali Yunesi, another conservative cleric and member of a committee investigating the recent murders, was the most likely candidate to succeed him.

Since the 1979 Islamic revolution Yunesi has held a number of senior positions — he headed the powerful Tehran

Revolutionary Court and helped set up the intelligence ministry with the arch-conservative cleric Mohammad Mohammadi Reyschahi.

Two deputy ministers at the intelligence ministry will also be replaced in the shake-up, the Tehran Times said.

Last year's murders shocked public opinion — secular dissident Dariush Foruhar and his wife Parvaneh were stabbed to death in their own apartment in November.

Soon afterwards unknown assailants killed writers Mohammad Mokhtari and Mohammad Pouyandeh and a third writer, Majid Sharif, was found dead in mysterious circumstances.

The ministry has so far arrested a number of its agents, who will be tried by a military tribunal.

Dori-Najafabadi's departure is the second from Khatami's government since his shock election victory in May 1997.

Last year reformist interior minister Abdullah Nuri was impeached by the conservative-dominated parliament after allowing pro-Khatami demonstrations which led to scuffles with hardliners.



CONDOLENCES FROM HONG KONG: The honorary Jordanian consul in Hong Kong, Fahed Sayah Baghdadi, looks on as an unidentified visitor Tuesday signs a condolence book for the family of King Hussein at the Jordanian consulate general in Hong Kong. King Hussein passed away at the age of 63 and was buried in Amman on Monday (AP photo)

Albright assured King Abdullah will continue quest for Mideast peace

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright says she has assurances from His Majesty King Abdullah that he will "carry his father's flag" in pursuing peace in the Middle East.

Promising to help the new monarch, Albright in an Associated Press interview Monday cautioned Iraq against any intimidation of its smaller neighbors.

"We have made it clear to Saddam Hussein that we're not threatening any of his neighbors. It would be a grave mistake, and we would be prepared to act," Albright said. "And that goes for Jordan."

In a wide-ranging conversation, Albright also made it clear she expects Israel to go ahead with its promised pullback on the West Bank despite repeated Israeli charges that the Palestinians are not carrying out all the promises they made in the Wye accords in October.

"From our perspective," Albright said, "the Israeli government and the Israeli Knesset agreed to Wye, and whatever else is going on, we believe the implementation should go on."

The process is in a slump, though, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed not to give up more than the two per cent he has relinquished unless the Palestinian National Authority takes tougher action against terror-

ists. "We keep pressing them," Albright said of the Palestinians and Arafat, who visited here last week and is due back in April.

In looking at the Middle East, the death of King Hussein and prospects for a successful succession in Jordan were mostly on Albright's mind.

Two weeks ago, she made an unscheduled stop in Amman to meet then Prince Abdullah, who had just been named the new heir to the throne by his father, and to offer him financial and other assistance.

"I think we know quite a lot about him," Albright said. "He is somebody who has been really dedicated in terms of fulfilling his father's wishes. What I was very impressed with was that he made it very clear — the phrase he used is 'I am going to carry my father's flag' — and that was in relationship to continuity in foreign policy and his dedication to the peace process."

Clearly impressed with the 37-year-old monarch, and the network he already is building with Arab leaders of his generation, Albright still withheld judgement, at least so far as whether he could emulate his father. "You don't step into the shoes of a great father and a great leader and not realize that there is some space in the toes,"

Arafat voices support for King

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat voiced strong support on Tuesday for His Majesty King Abdullah upon his return to the Gaza Strip from the late King Hussein's funeral. "We think he is the best of successors to the best of fathers," Arafat said, adding that he had had a private meeting with King Abdullah after the burial. "God is with him [King Abdullah] and is taking his hand on this difficult mission and this large task," Arafat said. "I am confident of his ability, God willing. We are behind him and beside him and with him on his difficult mission," Arafat said. King Abdullah, 37, who was only named as the successor to King Hussein two weeks ago, was sworn in as the new King on Sunday immediately after his father's death was announced. He has vowed to pursue his father's efforts to keep the Israeli-Palestinian peace process advancing despite difficulties encountered over the past two years under right-wing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Albright said. However, she added, "he has a good attitude, and he strikes me as somebody who has a lot of promise."

President Bill Clinton on Saturday registered U.S. support for the King by promising to accelerate \$300 million in aid.

State Department spokesman James Rubin said Monday about \$1 billion in assistance was planned over the next three years.

Albright said the Clinton administration may have to make some "further assessments" of Jordan's strategic situation. In the meantime, she warned Baghdad that "we are very close to Jordan and that Jordan plays an important

NEWS IN BRIEF

King urged to continue peace quest

SINGAPORE (R) — His Majesty King Abdullah must continue the quest for peace King Hussein started, Singapore's leading newspaper said on Tuesday. King Hussein's political versatility underwrote his "quest for peace, which crossed a milestone in his accord with Israel," the daily Straits Times said in an editorial. "The new King must continue that legacy... Countries committed to peace with King Abdullah well," said the paper, part of the government-linked Singapore Press Holdings publishing monopoly. It said if the region's Palestinian issue can finally be resolved fairly, "King Hussein will be in the forefront of memory, remembered as a leader without whom peace might not have been achieved."

Anthrax scare at State Department

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The top floor of the U.S. State Department was cordoned off and put on alert briefly Tuesday when an employee opened an envelope containing pellets said to harbor deadly anthrax. State Department spokesman James Rubin said a Joint Terrorism Task Force as well as local police and medical units were called to the floor where U.S. top diplomats, including Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, have their offices. "There was a note saying that by opening this letter the openers were hit now by anthrax," Rubin said, adding however that the pellets were found to be non-harmful and that no one had been injured.

Assad meets Clinton at funeral

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syrian President Hafez Assad held brief talks on the Middle East with U.S. counterpart Bill Clinton at King Hussein's funeral, an official Syrian newspaper reported Tuesday. The meeting took place Monday at Raghda Palace, Amman, where the two leaders were among hundreds of national leaders and officials attending the funeral of the King Hussein, who had died the previous day. The talks "dealt with the situation in the region and the willingness to revive contacts between the two countries," Al Thawra newspaper reported. Clinton and Assad "exchanged points of view," the paper said. The United States is known to want Syrian-Israeli peace talks to resume. The two states have not negotiated since early 1996.

Assad rejects Weizman meeting

TEL AVIV (AP) — Syrian President Hafez Assad rejected a request made by Israel's president to meet during the funeral of King Hussein, an Israeli lawmaker said Tuesday. Salah Tarif, an Arab Israeli legislator said he heard President Ezer Weizman suggest the meeting to Nayef Hawatmeh, a Palestinian guerrilla leader he met for the first time at Monday's funeral. "Weizman said he would like to meet Assad or shake his hand. And then I heard Hawatmeh afterwards raise the issue with Assad who said, 'no, not here,'" Tarif recounted. Weizman's office was not immediately available for comment.

Hamas fugitive recaptured

HEBRON (AP) — A senior Hamas fugitive suspected of killing two Israelis has been captured after escaping from jail in December, Palestinian police said Tuesday. Jamil Munir Jadallah was arrested Monday in the Hebron area and is expected to appear in a state security court in Nablus on Wednesday to face charges of "harming state security," said Maj. Gen. Ghazi Jabali, head of the Palestinian police. Jadallah, along with another suspect, was arrested last October on charges of killing two Israelis, Itamar Doron and Danny Vargas. Doron was shot while bathing with a friend in a pool near Jerusalem on Oct. 13. About two weeks later, Vargas' bullet-riddled body was dumped from a speeding car on the streets of Hebron.

Iranian hardliners break up rally

TEHRAN (AFP) — Hardliners chanting anti-U.S. slogans broke up a rally organized by a former U.S. hostage-taker turned leading supporter of improved relations with the United States, his newspaper reported Tuesday. More than a dozen fundamentalists attacked Abbas Abdi, now the editor of the left-wing daily Salam, as he prepared to address the rally in the Mohammadieh Mosque in the holy city of Qom, the paper reported. Intervention by his supporters prevented Abdi being hurt, his paper said, but the security forces took no action against the hardliners when they intervened to stop the disturbances. A member of the committee which planned the seizure of the U.S. embassy here in November 1979, Abdi is now a leading supporter of reformist President Mohammad Khatami and his calls for a "dialogue" between Islamic and Western civilisations.

Iraq targets 'enemy planes' in no-fly zone; Britain, U.S. deny

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi air defence troops on Tuesday targeted "enemy planes" in the no-fly zone in northern Iraq and reportedly hit one of them, the official INA news agency said, but the United States and Britain denied that any of their aircraft had been involved.

The agency, quoting a military spokesman, said the planes had come from Turkey, and fired a missile at Iraqi anti-aircraft positions, which had responded "firing at the planes and forcing them to flee."

"According to preliminary information, one of the enemy planes was hit," the spokesman added.

Several clashes have erupted between the Western allies' aircraft and Iraqi ground troops and jets in the exclusion zones since the end of the Desert Fox air campaign in December.

In Washington, the

Pentagon denied Tuesday that a U.S. plane had been hit.

This "absolutely did not occur," said spokesman Michael Doubleday. Captain Doubleday said he had "no reason" to believe the report and "every evidence" to deny it.

In London, meanwhile, the British defence ministry denied that Royal Air Force planes were involved in any hostile incident.

"As far as we are aware, all our aircraft flew operations today and all returned safely. [There was] no incident in the north as far as we are concerned."

The no-fly zones, imposed after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Iraq's Kurdish and Shiite minorities, extend north of the 36th Parallel and up to the 33rd Parallel in the south, reaching the outskirts of Baghdad.

Iraq says King Abdullah seeks better ties

BAGHDAD (AFP) — His Majesty King Abdullah is seeking to strengthen ties with Baghdad, Iraq's official INA news agency said Tuesday.

The King said his country "wanted to pursue bilateral relations and examine ways of developing them in the interest of the two brotherly people," the agency said.

The King's vow came during a meeting Monday in

Amman with Iraqi Vice President Taha Mohieddin Ma'arouf who was attending the funeral for King Hussein.

Ties between Baghdad and Amman have thawed following two crises, one in 1995 and the other at the beginning of 1998.

In February, the two countries signed an economic cooperation pact and renewed in January an oil agreement for 4.8 million

tonnes of Iraqi crude in 1999.

Prior to the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, when crippling U.N. sanctions were imposed on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait, Baghdad was one of Jordan's main trading partners.

Some Arab states accused Jordan of supporting Baghdad during the crisis.

Jordan condemned the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait but called for an Arab solution to the crisis rather than interna-

tional sanctions.

King Hussein's death on Sunday was announced with comment in Iraq.

In an interview published by Arabic language daily Al Hayat on Saturday, before the death of King Hussein, King Abdullah pledged to continue "the traditional policy" of Jordan with Iraq.

But he ruled out in present circumstances "a rehabilitation of the Iraqi regime."

Senate begins deliberations in Clinton trial

WASHINGTON (R) — The Senate went behind closed doors on Tuesday for final deliberations in President Bill Clinton's impeachment trial, rejecting an attempt to let the public see the conclusive debate on the president's fate.

With votes to acquit Clinton on two articles of impeachment expected by Friday, the Senate turned off the television cameras, closed the doors and cleared the chamber for the last arguments in the month-long trial.

"I hope that we won't just have speeches, that in fact we will have deliberations," said Senate Republican Leader Trent Lott, who opposed opening up the proceedings.

The Senate voted 59-41 to open the debate, falling eight votes short of the two-thirds majority needed to change Senate rules and let the public see the debate on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice against Clinton.

Proponents of opening the doors said Americans were entitled to hear the arguments leading to the final votes, while opponents said open debate would lead to grandstanding that would prolong the trial and limit a full exploration of the issues.

"I'm very sorry we aren't going to be

able to deliberate in the open so Americans can see why their senators voted the way they did," Sen. Kay Bailey Huchinson, a Texas Republican, told reporters.

Senators will be allowed to put their final debate speeches in the Congressional Record after the trial, a compromise that Democratic Sen. Paul Wellstone of Minnesota called "a great leap sideways."

Few senators believed the final debate would change any opinions, as votes have solidified through weeks of arguments and presentations in the second presidential impeachment trial in history. And almost no one believed the Senate would get the 67 votes needed to remove Clinton from office.

"To honestly believe you are going to change any minds in a closed-door session is a remarkable leap," said Sen. Chuck Hagel, a Nebraska Republican.

Both parties are anxious to conclude the trial by Friday, when Congress is scheduled to begin a week-long recess. With the votes to acquit Clinton nearing, senators continued to hammer out a censure motion condemning his behaviour in the Monica Lewinsky affair.

Democratic proponents of censure, eager to avoid appearing as if they were exonerating Clinton, were seeking Republican support. But opponents challenged the constitutionality of censure and vowed to use procedural manoeuvres to block its consideration.

"I think it's about politics. I think it's about cover," Republican Sen. Larry Craig of Idaho said of the drive for censure, which he has described as a "wet noodle."

"I think there is a real frustration among a lot of senators that somehow you've got to discipline this president, you've got to do something, and yet you can't discipline him," he said.

Senate Democrats said they believed there would be majority support for censure and criticised expected efforts to block it through parliamentary means.

"The question is whether, even with growing bipartisan support, censure can survive a classic Senate parliamentary attack," said Sen. Joseph Lieberman, a Connecticut Democrat.

"I think this ought to end in a unified statement of national values, not in embarrassing, divisive parliamentary Senate gridlock," Lott said.

No evidence of arms production at bombed Sudan plant — expert

NEW YORK (AP) — Soil and debris samples from a Sudanese pharmaceutical plant destroyed by U.S. cruise missiles in August have yielded no evidence the factory was used to make chemical weapons, according to an American scientist hired by the plant's owner.

The New York Times reported Tuesday that an analysis of soil, sludge and debris collected at the bombed-out Al Shifa plant in Khartoum, Sudan failed to detect Empta or Empa, two precursors of chemical weapons agents the U.S. government has said were produced at the factory.

"What we did was to collect samples from a variety of locations and have them analysed by one of the top laboratories in the world for this kind of work," Thomas Tullius, chairman of Boston University's chemistry department and the leader of the sampling project, was quoted by the Times as saying.

Following the attack on Al Shifa in August, U.S. officials justified the raid by saying that clandestinely collected soil sam-

ples at the plant had shown the presence of the two chemicals.

The raid, and another on alleged terrorist training camps in Khost, Afghanistan, were meant to curb activities of Saudi-financier and alleged terrorist Osama Ben Laden, U.S. officials said.

"We stand by our evidence indicating the presence of a chemical weapons precursor at this plant," P.J. Crowley, a spokesman for the National Security Council, told the Times.

"We continue to believe that this was an appropriate action to preempt Osama Ben Laden from further attacks against the United States," he said.

Salah Idris, a Saudi businessman who claims ownership of the pharmaceutical plant, is preparing to sue the United States for damages, his American lawyer said Friday.

Lawyers for Idris said he will bring charges in a U.S. court unless the Clinton administration agrees to compensate him and release his assets in American banks, said attorney John Scanlon.

Avqaf ministry announces prayers for King

Volume 24 Number 70

Saddam presents condolences to Jordan embassy

Syrian FM upbeat about improving bilateral ties

Thieves break into Barak's car

Israeli who spied for Soviets released

Israeli wounded in Gaza bomb blast

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — An Israeli civilian was slightly wounded in the Palestinian-orchestrated Gaza bombing when a remote-controlled bomb was set off as it passed the Israeli military base, said Wednesday. The bomb was on a road between the town of Beit Hanoun and Gaza City, and the border with Israel at Karni. The civilian, whose car was being escorted by Israeli troops, was taken to hospital in Jerusalem.